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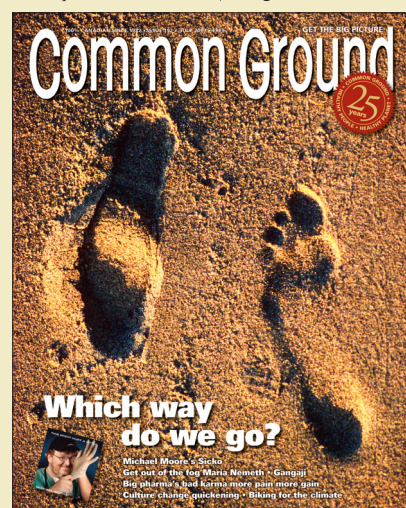
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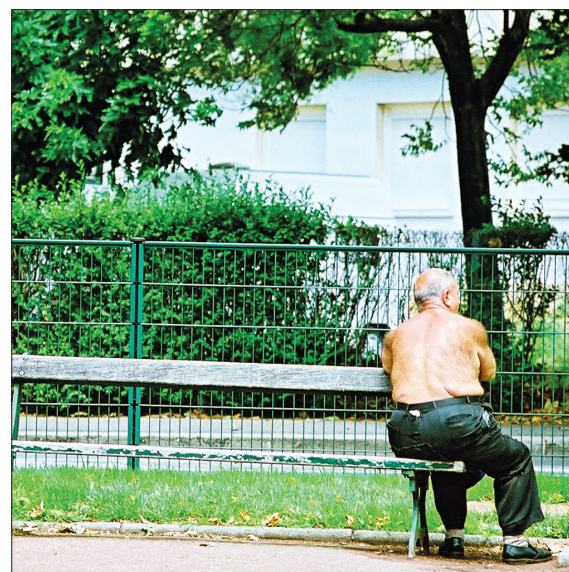


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Getting out of the

Mastering life's energies

INSPIRATION

by Maria Nemeth, PhD

If we continue down this path, we're liable to end up where we're headed.

— Traditional Buddhist saying

There is no way around it: if you want clarity in your life, you first have to see where, up until now, clarity has been lacking. There's no leapfrogging to lucidity without understanding where you're leaping from.

It's a challenge to become clear, to wake up, become conscious and stop bumping into life. When we wake up, we see what is really important and valuable to us. We can see the path that has been waiting for us all along.

We can begin to live the life we were meant to live.

It's nice to wake up sooner rather than

But imagine the thick fog does not clear. It continues to obscure your vision. You don't know you're on the wrong side of the road, and even though you occasionally have to swerve to avoid oncoming traffic, you keep driving along, still in a fog, still on the wrong side of the road. But because of your frequent near misses, you begin an internal dialogue: "Why does this keep happening to me? What's my problem? Do I secretly enjoy minor traffic accidents? Why do I attract all these cars? Why do I keep sabotaging my drives? I must be thinking the wrong thoughts; if I thought more positively, maybe this would stop happening to me."

Preoccupied with these thoughts, you find yourself even more prone to the run-

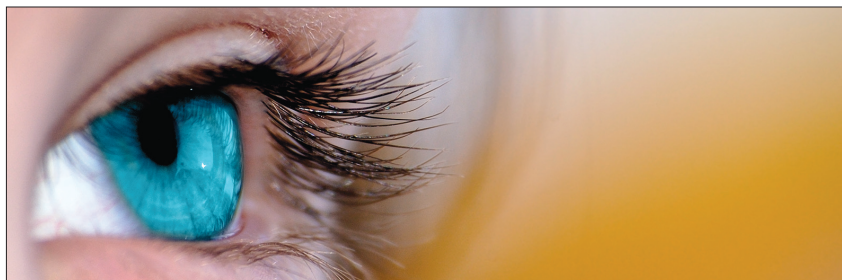
truck speeding toward you, you simply move over to the right lane. No one has to tell you to move over, and you don't need any advice about how to do it. You don't need to mull it over; your actions are natural, instinctive and effective. This is because you have a wellspring of wisdom within you just waiting to be tapped.

"That may be well and good," you say. "But do I really need the 10-ton truck in my path? I got out of the way, but it was a close call, and I was pretty shaken up." Good point. What we want is gentle course corrections, adjustments made with ease instead of dramatic swerves. We want to see the truck when it's five miles away, realize our lane error and move over without all the heart-pounding.

The nature of the fog

The inner conversations that discourage you from going for your dreams may seem fresh and convincing when they're going around and around in your head. That's the nature of the fog: punch at it, and it absorbs your fist. Wave your arms to brush it away and it laughs at you. Shine the headlight of analysis on it and you just get more glare.

Allen, who dreamed of a career selling gemstones, had a fog that went like this: "I want to travel to faraway bazaars looking for amber or hike to remote mountain villages where they sell the best jade. But first I've got to figure out how to get rid of my fear of failure. I have these success issues that have been with me for years. I'm working on dealing with them



later so that you don't have to repeat the same lessons over and over (and over) again. As you've probably noticed, when you are in the "not that again" pattern, the lessons only get bigger and harder. Life is trying to get our attention, to wake us up. If we're in a deep sleep, this can be a real jolt.

Imagine you're driving on a country road. A grey fog swirls around you. Turning on your headlights only seems to make it worse. Suddenly the fog clears and you see that you're driving on the wrong side of the road and that a 10-ton truck a quarter of a mile away is coming straight at you.

Do you pause to ponder how you got on the wrong side of the road? Do you think back to your parents' driving behaviour and try to figure out how it might have affected your own? Do you work on accessing your "inner driver"? No! You pull over. You get out of the truck's path. Your actions are clear, focused and simple. That's because you woke up.

ins you are so busy trying to understand. Many of us have become spiritual road-kill on our hero's path because we're asking the wrong questions. Some, like the ones above, might actually cause the fog to thicken. At the very least, asking those particular questions doesn't lead us to change lanes so we can keep out of harm's way.

I'll give you some specific ways to lift the fog from your path, including better questions to ask. Applying these techniques is exciting because when you lift the fog, when you see clearly where you are, you will intuitively know what to do next.

Let me say this again. It sounds so simple, so obvious, that we might miss it. We tend to think important truths have to be complex and hard to grasp. When you see clearly what is before you, you will know in your heart what to do. Your actions will be simple and precise, with no wasted effort.

When the fog lifts and you see the

What you focus on creates your experience of reality. If you focus on endlessly processing your issues, doubts and dilemmas, you get fog. Focus on what you want to create and contribute and the fog begins to lift.

That is our aim here: not just to lift the fog, but also to do it in a peaceful, graceful way. Small adjustments and no big messes to clean up – imagine the energy saved! How creative could we be with such clarity instead of wearing ourselves out coping with one near miss after another?

Your fog may be a vague sense of frustration, resignation or cynicism when it comes to your important dreams. You are frustrated because you think you don't have the time, money, imagination or physical vitality to tackle them. You are resigned to putting them off until life settles down and you're under less stress. Or you have cynically given up on even dreaming the dreams that thrill your heart. You are convinced that is for other people, not for you.

You are in touch with thoughts like these, congratulations! They are part of the fog and before you can clear that fog away, you have to realize you're driving in it.

now. But I'm not ready to make a move yet. When these feelings improve, I can talk to someone about what it takes to get into the gemstone business, but I need to handle all this first."

To see your own fog, try this: Get four pieces of paper. With the first paper in front of you, think of a goal or dream that you've put aside until... Now take a deep breath and list all the reasons why you've put it off. Do this quickly and try to empty out your mind. Even if what you write doesn't make sense, keep writing down all the doubts, worries and "issues." What are the excuses you've given yourself or others? Get them all down. Then think of another goal or dream you haven't pursued. On the second piece of paper, write the reasons for this dream deferment. Be as specific as you can.

Finally, think of a third, unrelated goal, preferably one from another area of your life. And you know the drill: get all your reasons down on a third piece of paper. Now read over what you've

written. You'll likely see some words or phrases repeating themselves, regardless of the specific dream. You might even spot a theme or story line – What you lack, how others thwart you, a pattern that goes back to your childhood, or a recurring feeling. Take that fourth piece of paper. First put an A, and write all these recurring themes, words or phrases down under that heading.

Now we get to the mechanism behind the mist. On that same fourth page, write down a B. Then think of everything you have told yourself about why these reasons make sense. What do you tell yourself about why you have these particular worries, doubts, frustrations and issues? Jot these reasons down under B. Look at A and B on that fourth page. What you now have is an outline of how your mind looks when caught up in self-analysis. You might feel uncomfortable or tense when looking at this. It may feel claustrophobic or sad when you realize you've been living with these thoughts.

Trained as a psychologist, I became adept at analysis. I learned how to hunt down, bag, skin and truss just about any explanation or rationale. I discovered how to serve them up in a stew and I've eaten that stew myself, convinced that all these reasons nourished me. They didn't. Taking them in only forestalled the inevitable: seeing that I wasn't moving forward or creating what was important to me.

Here's a personal example: I'm in the psychology department's old building at UCLA, in my dissertation adviser's office. I explain to him why my mother's conflicted relationship with success has made it difficult for me to finish the chapter I had promised to write. I believe what I'm saying, but he just chuckles, "That's a good one! Okay, I'll give you two more weeks." I'm relieved; I got the extension I wanted. But as I leave his office I'm also embarrassed: was that excuse really necessary? It sure didn't leave me with a sense of satisfaction.

Much later, I went to a weekend seminar in San Francisco, where we were asked to look at the words we use to describe ourselves. I saw then, as my adviser had seen years before, how much energy I used focusing on my internal conflicts. I remember stepping out of the seminar building and thinking: "Did Martin Luther King Jr. have control issues? Did Margaret Mead have family-of-origin conflicts? Did they care if they did? Or were they too busy living out their goals and dreams? What were the questions that guided their lives, and how did they differ from the ones I was asking myself?"

Don't misunderstand me; there's a time and place for analyzing doubts and worries and for looking at situations in the past that call out for healing. We all need to make sense of our thoughts and feelings. But there comes a time when we are just spinning the same yarn, again and again, with little to show for it. We

remain as we are. This can be true even if our thoughts are deep – especially if they are deep.

I'm not suggesting you stop using your analytical powers. I'm asking instead that you consider the ways habitual thought patterns stave off luminosity. We all have these habits of thought and they are tenacious because they've become routine – habitual. They've become routine because they have an internal logic; they have "worked" for us in a sense, if only to account for why our lives have turned out as they have. But when we bring only these old patterns of thought to life's fresh adventures, we run the risk of turning the new into the old.

It is important to acknowledge that our thoughts are hard to control. For example, if someone mentions hot fudge sundaes and then tells you not to think about them, what do you get? Rows of them dancing in your head! Recognizing this is actually good news. When we realize our thoughts are not going anywhere, no matter how much we poke and prod at them, and when we see that poking and prodding them actually creates more fog, we can relax.

In this relaxed state we can shift our attention away from these repetitive doubts and worries and focus it instead on something that's more interesting to us: our deep-down dreams, for instance.

This is really the fundamental key to luminosity: focus on what you love, what's interesting to you, what sings to your heart. What you focus on creates your experience of reality. If you focus on endlessly processing your issues, doubts and dilemmas, you get fog. Focus on what you want to create and contribute and the fog begins to lift. Strengthen this focus muscle and the fog recedes further. "Foggy" days or moments will always come around, but they become the exception, not the rule.



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You are your body

THE POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

Why have most religions condemned or denied the body? It seems that spiritual seekers have always regarded the body as a hindrance or even sinful. On the level of the body, humans are very close to animals. All the basic bodily functions and feelings – pleasure, pain, breathing, eating, drinking, defecating, sleeping, the drive to find a mate and procreate, and, of course, birth and death – we share with the animals. A long time after their fall from grace, humans suddenly woke up in what seemed to be an animal body and they found this very disturbing.

“Don’t fool yourself. You are no more than an animal.” This seemed to be the truth staring them in the face, but it was too disturbing a truth to tolerate. Adam and Eve saw that they were naked and

of-body experiences. Many still do. Even the Buddha is said to have practised body denial through fasting and extreme forms of asceticism for six years, but he did not attain enlightenment until after he had given up this practice.

The fact is no one has ever become enlightened through denying or fighting the body or through an out-of-body experience. Although such an experience can be fascinating and can give you a glimpse of the state of liberation from the material form, in the end you will always have to return to the body, where the essential work of transformation takes place. Transformation is through the body, not away from it. This is why no true master has ever advocated fighting or leaving the body, although their mind-based followers often have.

**The fact is no one has ever become enlightened through denying
or fighting the body or through an out-of-body experience...**

Transformation is through the body, not away from it.

they became afraid. Unconscious denial of their animal nature set in very quickly. The threat that they might be taken over by powerful, instinctual drives and revert to complete unconsciousness was very real. Shame and taboos appeared around certain parts of the body and bodily functions, especially sexuality.

The light of their consciousness was not yet strong enough to make friends with their animal nature, to allow it to be and even enjoy that aspect of themselves, let alone to go deeply into it to find the divine hidden within, the reality within the illusion. So they did what they had to do. They began to disassociate from their body. They now saw themselves as *having* a body, rather than just *being* one.

When religions arose, this disassociation became even more pronounced as the “you are not your body” belief. Countless people in the East and West throughout the ages have tried to find God, salvation or enlightenment through denial of the body. This took the form of denial of sense pleasures – sexuality in particular – and fasting and other ascetic practices. People even inflicted pain on their body in an attempt to weaken or punish it because they regarded it as sinful. In Christianity, this was called mortification of the flesh.

Others tried to escape from the body by entering trance states or seeking out-

Of the ancient teachings concerning the body, only certain fragments survive, such as Jesus’s statement, “Your whole body will be filled with light.” They also survive as myths, such as the belief that Jesus never relinquished his body, but remained one with it and ascended into “heaven” with it. To this day, almost no one has understood those fragments or the hidden meaning of certain myths, and the “you are not your body” belief has prevailed universally, leading to body denial and attempts to escape from the body. Countless seekers have thus been prevented from attaining spiritual realization for themselves and from becoming finders.

Do not fight against the body; in doing so you are fighting against your own reality. You are your body. The body that you can see and touch is only a thin illusory veil. Underneath it lies the invisible inner body, the doorway into Being, into “life unmanifested.” Through the inner body, you are inseparably connected to this unmanifested “One Life,” birthless, deathless, eternally present. Through the inner body, you are forever one with God.

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Soul is peace

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

What is a soul and where does it reside? It is easy to think of soul as some kind of amorphous “thing” that evaporates like a puff of smoke when we breathe our last breath. But since we cannot see it or measure it, some may even doubt its existence. While we cannot go to the literature on the subject and come up with a definitive description, volumes have been written about it and it is something with which many humans have had an experience.

To my mind, the best place to do research on the subject is within our own consciousness. We are connected to everything that has ever been; we are a part of all of nature – not just the Earth – for we are affected by the phases of the moon and the flares upon the sun. We

SPIRITUALITY

many, many circles beyond even these.

We may not tune into them because we keep our “tuner” at the same spot all the time. Perhaps when we do move the dial, we do it so quickly or fleetingly that we miss the fact that there was actually something coming through.

Soul, I believe, is a frequency. On some level, we are all part of one big soul, like the airwaves. At the same time, I think we all have our own distinct frequency, much like individual radio stations. Another analogy is that we are like a drop of water from the ocean. One drop is not completely identical to any other drop, but all are made of the same stuff. It is when we close

First and foremost, we are soul. When we come to Earth, we slowly assume the cloak of ego. Like an actor who stays in his role after the curtain closes, we come to believe we really are that ego-being.

are one of the by-products of the “Big Bang.” Our existence is a result of the co-creation of forces of nature.

If we close our eyes and stop all thinking, what is it that we experience? We still have awareness, but our attention shifts from the here and now of the world to something much larger. Many consider this to be just a little “time-out” from the real world, just a little empty space between the unfolding scenarios of our life. With this kind of thinking, we are like the little ants who think it’s all about the hill. With their heads down, they go about their work, completely oblivious to the context in which their lives exist. Well, the Earth might just be our own little hill.

We do have consciousness, however, and it is like a receiver/transmitter; we can use it to connect to and communicate with the world beyond our own bodies and we can also use it to perceive what is outside of us.

Imagine concentric circles of awareness: The first circle is all that we can perceive, directly with our senses, in our immediate environment. The next circle may include information we are given, but with which we have no direct experience. Subsequent circles may include ideas and intuitive or psychic qualities. We can be fairly certain that there are

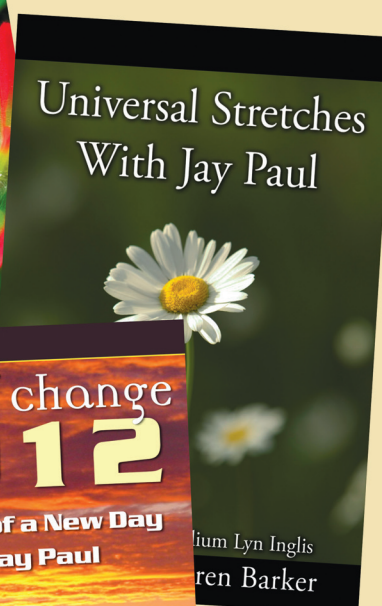
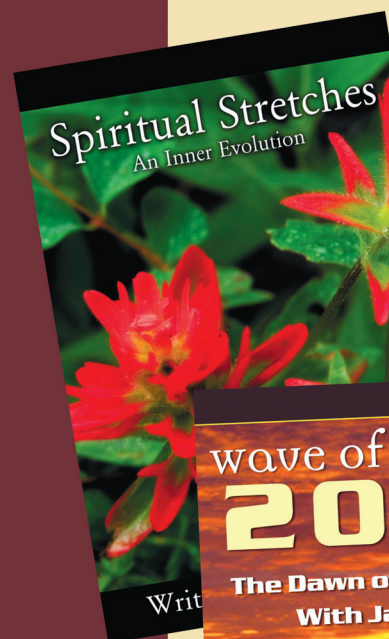
our eyes and stop all thought that we can simultaneously feel our own frequency and are ready to receive. When we stop all thinking and detach from who we are in this lifetime, ego falls away and all that remains is soul.

First and foremost, we are soul. When we come to Earth, we slowly assume the cloak of ego. Like an actor who stays in his role after the curtain closes, we come to believe we are that ego-being. However, ego is only a layer that formed in reaction to being in the world. It is not who we are at our very core. Ego carries all the suffering, struggle, attachments, vulnerability, fear, insecurity and wounding that can come from being in the world.

Soul, on the other hand, is a place, an energy, a frequency of peace, calmness, equanimity, love, compassion and infinite understanding. It is like the calm, clear surface of a clean lake on a bright spring morning. Given that, we just might choose to tune ego out more often and rest into a little soulfulness.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and the author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. For articles and information about her books and personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca. See display ad this issue.

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Choose peace over problems

by Gangaji

In the interest of peace, perhaps it is time to take an honest look at what you consider to be “problems” in your life. In order to even reflect on a problem, you will see that first you have to go into memories of the past to generate a story of the supposed problem. This is a moment of choice and this choice is present in every moment of your life.

Generally, we choose to remember the past to recreate our problems. If we choose not to regenerate them, what does that mean about their importance? How can we know we have learned the lesson? We have an investment in the problem’s importance, so we go back to the past to conjure it up again. This is called “rebirth.” This is the choice to be reborn with the same problems, stories and miseries, day by day. Once we are aware of that choice, we have the possibility of recognizing exactly what is required to keep any problem alive. It is necessary to invest time, effort and energy on what “was” to keep feeding the importance of the problem.

We search for answers to alleviate our problems and to end our suffering, but the search follows the rebirth, a rebirth that we have actually chosen. The choice we often make is to be reborn as the sufferer, rather than simply be here as nobody, as nothing. The willingness to be nothing, to defend against nothing, can lead to exceedingly intense feeling. A great fear can arise: “I could really disappear here, and then the whole of my life will be of no actual importance.” But you have to understand that this is going to happen anyway. You really *will* disappear at some point, and even though you may make great contributions in your life, finally, they too will disappear.

So the question becomes: Are you willing, at least for this moment, to not be reborn? If you are, then you can recognize what *is* unborn, what remains alive without story, without suffering, without problem. Recognize what remains alive and let its spaciousness, its peace, be revealed as your own heart. You can recognize it as yourself, having nothing to do with birth or death. If you are willing to be true to that recognition,

then rebirth is not a problem, because then your story, your “problems,” are consciously recognized as appearing in the vast intelligence of who you truly are. Then you know yourself as essentially free of any past. The past can be welcomed, can be learned from and can be appreciated in its full spectrum of beauty and horror.

No matter what the world is reflecting, whether circumstances are beautiful or terrifying, if your internal story is one of victimhood, you will suffer. It is very simple. If you are quite certain that you aren’t telling yourself a story of victimization, and yet you continue to suffer, then I suggest you are lying to yourself. You are telling yourself some thread of an ancient story of how you have been wronged. Whether it is a story of how God, or your parents or circumstances have wronged you, or how you have wronged yourself, it is all a story of you being the victim.

Even the most violent aggressors, when the superficial layer of aggression is cracked, have a story of having been wronged. Striking out in anger or revenge always involves a story of victimization. Seeing how this victim story plays out in your own life is an important step toward realizing true freedom. When you really see it, you see that it has to be recreated each time it plays. It may surface in your mind through momentum, but to play it through takes energy, attention, belief, emotion and some kind of masochistic pleasure in the pain. Yes, it’s shocking! To see this operating within your own mind can be quite disturbing.

The willingness to realize the truth of yourself, the willingness to be free, is the willingness to no longer be a victim—regardless of pain, circumstances, or the actions of others. To stop being a victim doesn’t mean to trivialize the horror in your life, to deny it, gloss over it or repress it. It means that you can fully meet whatever appears. You don’t have to hide, run, justify, wail, curse or moan. You can just meet life as it is. Are you willing to let your stories of victimization go? Are you willing to let all those horrible aggressors go unpunished?

At a certain point, you have to be will-

ing to just call it off. Yes, there has been horrible suffering, and you have been on both ends of it. You have perpetuated it, and you have experienced it directed at you. Are you willing to end it? You are free to suffer, and you are free to stop suffering. No one can end it but you. That is where your freedom is. Conscious freedom is the freedom to meet suffering consciously, and then consciously choose to let it go. The bondage is in being unaware of the choice. You can choose to be free, or you can choose to suffer. It is up to you.

Everyone has experienced the sweet release of forgiveness, as well as the

hard coldness of not forgiving. You know the difference, and you know the investment in the story that keeps a lack of forgiveness in place. You also know the relief when you actually forgive and let go of the burden. Our parents were not perfect. They consciously or unconsciously did things that were harmful to us, as our grandparents did things that were harmful to our parents. Our lovers, our children, our governments and our competing tribes have harmed us.

Now is the time to forgive. Horrible things are continually being done all over the planet, in our own individual minds and in the collective mind. To for-



give these horrors does not necessarily mean to forget. You can forgive and let go without forgetting. A huge learning and humbling occurs when you are willing to see the story of humanity in all its horrors. Yet you can also recognize how much effort is needed to hang on to the story. You can see that all the effort and attention put into hanging on are actually a meditation on not forgiving. The stories continue to replay, with an obsession over what should have been done or what might be done again.

Continuing to replay the story saps your energy. It is exhausting. I honour the need to remember and to witness the horror that has been done and is still being done. But usually we bring to that memory more hatred, suffering, and misery, which ensures even more hatred, suffering and misery.

After the war in Yugoslavia in 1999, I saw a news clip of a home video filmed by a man who said he was making the video so that his children could see what had been done to them, and so that they would never forget or forgive. The horrors occurring at that time were themselves in retaliation for what one group of people had previously done to the other. The futility and waste of this kind of tribal warfare are going on within our own minds as well: "I'm not going to let

her, shifting her whole personality. I had had some space from her for years, and I decided one year that I would call her on Mother's Day and simply lie to her and tell her what a great mother she was. She was old and sick and she didn't have many years left, so why not? I called her and told her what a great mother she had been to me, and as the words came out of my mouth, they were true. I didn't mean she had treated me well, because she hadn't. I didn't mean her intentions were great; sometimes they were, and sometimes they weren't. But as I told her that she had been a good mother, my life experience was finally augmented by my relationship with this very difficult woman. My difficulty with my mother finally contributed to the richness of my life. In that sense, she was indeed a good mother.

What a relief there was in telling her this. Concurrently, my ability to forgive myself for having hated her for so many years arose. It was such a simple act. I had no idea I would see such ramifications of healing. Finally, to be able to forgive this whole experience of humanity, with all its functions, drives, aggressions and desires, is to recognize what is untouched by any of that, what remains pure, innocent and free even in the grossest of stories. In our

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go of what *they* did to *me*, because it was *wrong*." Yes, wrongs have been done and are still being done. There is no need to forget or deny the wrongs that have been done both to you and by you, but you can let go of suffering over them. "Forgive them, for they know not what they do" is the truth.

Any war that is going on because of what happened yesterday is the result of ignorance, of holding on to some idea of revenge. It is very tempting to hold on to these kinds of views because there is some pleasure in it, and that pleasure must be recognized. It is the pleasure of egoic righteousness. When you are unwilling to forgive, and you are holding on to a story of your suffering and who did it to you, you are cursing them, whether consciously or unconsciously. You must be willing to stop the karma with yourself, be willing to say, "No, this time it goes no further than me." This is the willingness to be at peace. The willingness to forgive is a natural outgrowth of the willingness to be free, and gives you the clarity to recognize the temptation to hold on.

I once called my mother on Mother's Day. My mother was a sarcastic and mean alcoholic. Alcohol was poisoning

desire to hold on to revenge, we actually keep ourselves from the experience of freedom. As with everything else, in our desire to hold on to one thing, we keep something else away. In the desire to give something, we actually receive. You can inquire directly within: "What am I not willing to forgive?"

As you do this, you find another opportunity to bring to consciousness what is not consciously seen, what might still be holding your mind in bondage. No effort is needed here, only the willingness to be completely honest. Once you have honestly seen what you are not willing to forgive, you might also find it helpful to ask yourself: "What am I willing to forgive?" Recognize forgiveness and savour it for a moment. It is important not to *force* anything, just to welcome all into the heart of consciousness. Can you forgive? Can you accept forgiveness?

Excerpted from The Diamond in Your Pocket by Gangaji (Sounds True, Inc.)

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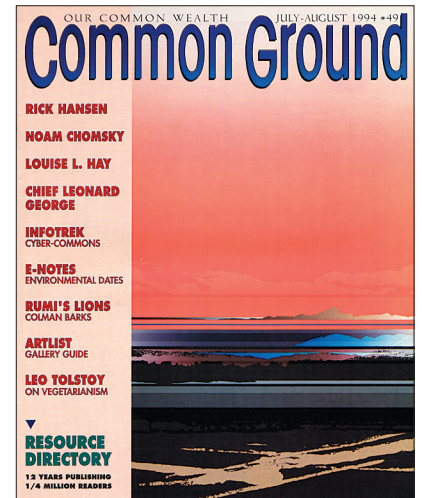
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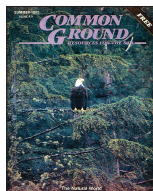
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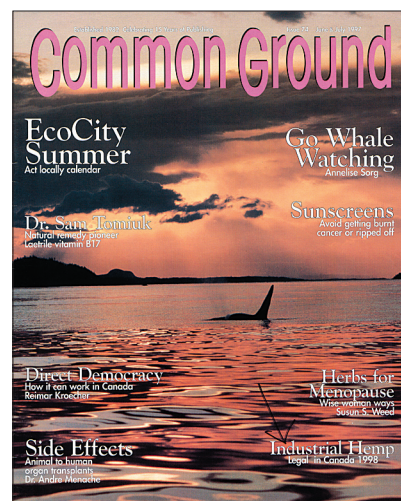
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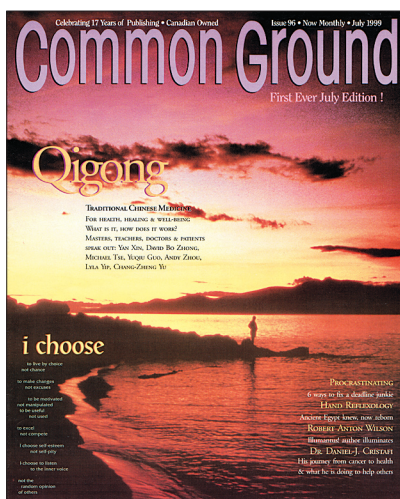
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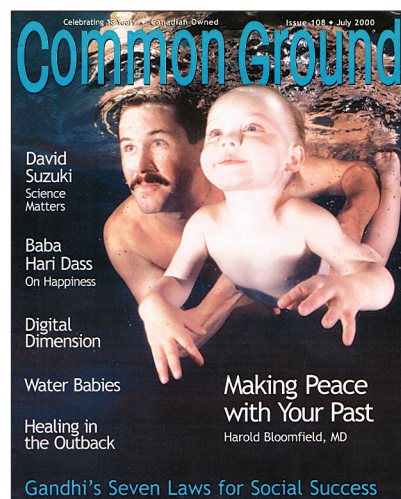
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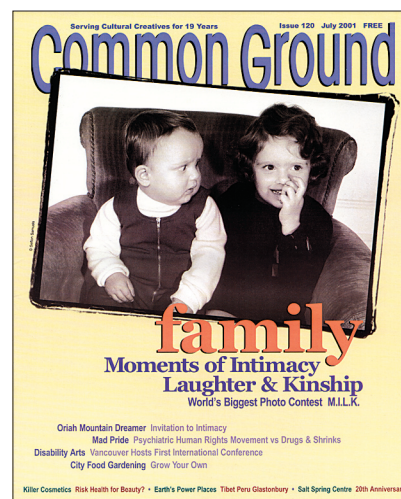
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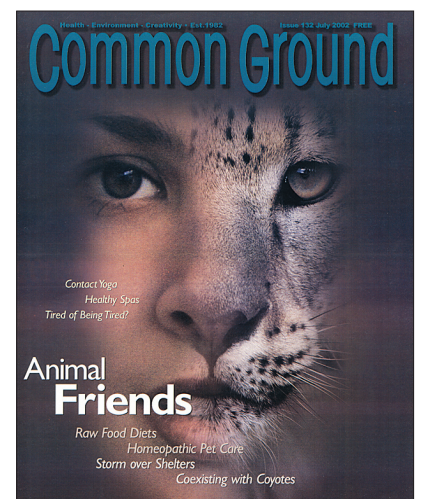
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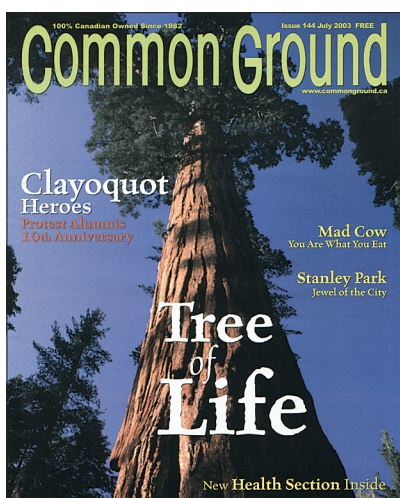
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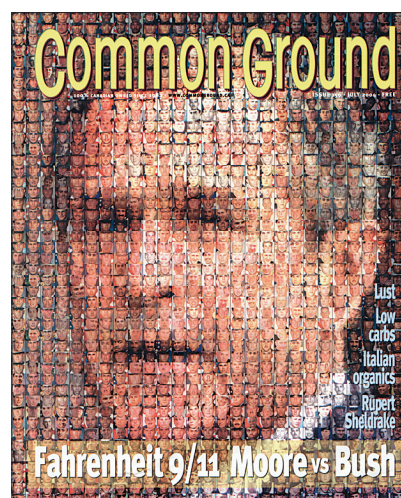
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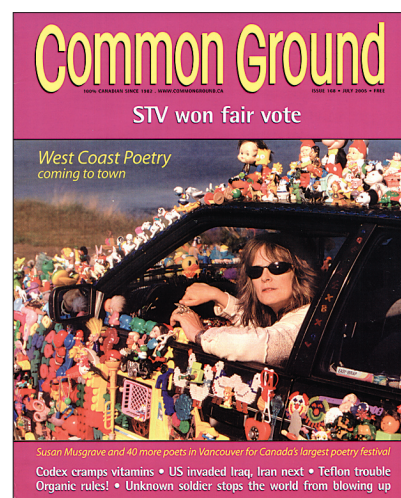
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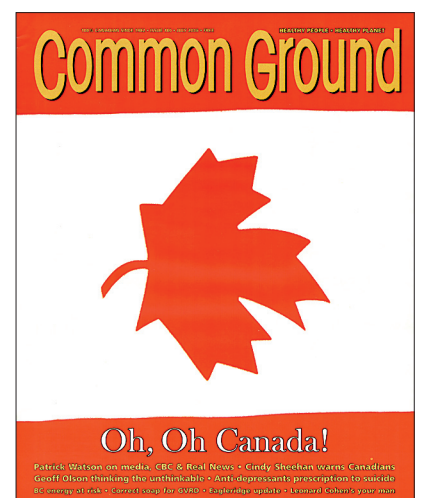
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Biking for climate change solutions

by Mary Stockdale



It all began in Vernon last summer when the owner of the Towne theatre screened Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* for 13 weeks. Out of a total population of 40,000 in the Vernon area, more than 10,000 residents are estimated to have seen the film. Shortly afterward, a local environmental group, the Sustainable Environment Network Society (SENS), held a meeting to discuss what Vernon could do about climate change. The town hall was filled to capacity.

Wheels for Change is a grassroots campaign organized by a diverse group of British Columbians who share a deep concern about climate change. The campaign offers an opportunity for people across the province to gather together and take positive action. From June 30 to July 22, people of all ages are invited to take part in a 1,000-kilometre bike tour from Nelson to Victoria. With everyone's help, we hope to collectively cycle 40,000 kilometres, the equivalent to circling the Earth. People wishing to get involved but who are unable to make the three-week

commitment are welcome to join the ride for as long as they can manage.

Our numbers for the tour keep increasing. Depending upon where we are on the route, our core group ranges from 18 to 35 people, and this number could increase over the final weeks. Dozens more are planning to join us just for the day, and hundreds will be taking part in our shorter bike rides through the towns and cities.

We are so impressed by the diversity, passion and commitment in the people that this campaign is bringing together. We can see that we are tapping into a strong current of feeling, shared by many people across the province, that stronger action needs to be taken on this issue, and soon. We want to inspire people to take action not only in their own lives, but also in the way they place their vote. With only a few more election cycles left to us to get it right, we must let our politicians know that our vote goes to the party with the most effective plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Local groups across the province are supporting Wheels for Change by holding smaller bike rides and by sharing food, music, speeches and other activities. Community events include the event bike parade launch in Nelson, followed by events in Grand Forks, Osoyoos, Penticton, Kelowna, Vernon, Salmon Arm, Falkland, Kamloops, Hope, Abbotsford and Maple Ridge. The ride finishes up with two huge, family-friendly bike rides on the finale weekend of July 21 and 22, along the Central Valley Greenway in Vancouver and the Lochside Trail in Victoria, from the ferry to the legislative lawns.

If you are interested in getting involved, visit www.wheelsforchange.ca for a schedule of places and times or call Mary, 250-307-4907 or Celia, 250-503-8082.



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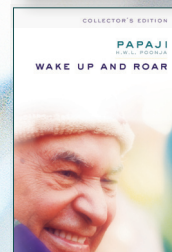
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HEALTH

DRUG BUST Alan Cassels

Last month, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, an accounting and consulting company based in New York, published a report saying the global pharmaceutical market will double in value to \$1.3 trillion by 2020. The report stated that warmer temperatures brought on by climate change will drive up rates of respiratory illness and infectious diseases and people in northern climes will begin to be exposed to malaria, cholera, diphtheria and dengue fever.

Pharmaceuticals is not the only industry seeing new opportunities in the changing world maps of disease and demographics. For drug makers, global warming is just another fortunate market

doctors' offices. The truth is, as a population, it is healthy people, not old people, who are disproportionately using more and more health services – more doctor visits, more tests and more drugs – and those costs are forever mounting.

Here's my favourite, new soundbite: It is not the aging of the population, but the gouging of the population that is causing health care systems to bleed red ink.

Morris Barer, a health care economist at UBC, wrote over a decade ago that population aging is actually a very gradual phenomenon – more like a glacier than an avalanche – and that an aging population adds about one percent each year in total healthcare costs for all of us.

of the pharmaceuticals themselves. We don't respond to the efficacy of the lobbying behind the coverage of those pharmaceuticals," he said. He went on to explain that BC will be "studying" the issue over the course of three years, to determine the effectiveness of these drugs in the "real world."

The key issue around any health care spending is knowing what you are buying. Unfortunately, the major Alzheimer's drugs are next to useless for most people. They also have a number of adverse side effects that range from the merely unpleasant (nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea) to nasty (agitation, delirium and violence) to fatal (i.e. death). As if

the disease isn't bad enough on its own.

The effectiveness of Alzheimer's drugs is measured by a patient's score on a scale called the Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale – Cognitive (ADAS-Cog) – which measures cognitive functioning. A patient taking one of the four Alzheimer's drugs will score an average of 1.4 to 3.4 points better on the 70-point scale than those on placebo. Is this meaningful?

Sounds like a washout to me. Dr. Todd Golde, a neuroscientist at the Mayo Clinic, was recently quoted in the *National Post* about the major Alzheimer's drug trials:

continued on p. 32

For drug makers, global warming is just another fortunate market driver, sure to increase demand for more drugs, just like the perceived greying of the population has made many pharmaceutical investors feverish with delight.

driver, sure to increase demand for more drugs, just like the perceived greying of the population has made many pharmaceutical investors feverish with delight.

Here at home, BC politicians have seen much doom and gloom stemming from an "aging" demographic; during his watch, former Minister of Health Colin Hansen referred to the aging of the population as a "tsunami" and his colleague, MLA Katherine Whittred once introduced a new piece of legislation that she said would "... address the needs of BC's growing and rapidly aging population." Liberal MLA Ralph Sultan, whose name has graced these pages in the recent past, best sums up the gestalt of our times: "In 21st century medicine, we've come to respect three big health cost drivers: new technology, the proliferating pharmacy and increased consumer knowledge and expectations. However, it is longevity that now looms as the greatest cost driver of all."

Yup. We're getting old and the health care bills of the aged are going to break the bank. Bad news for all of us, but the mother lode for those who sell health services and drugs. Colin, Katherine and Ralph are not unique, as other politicians around the world wring their hands at the coming tsunami. Problem is they're blaming the wrong culprit.

Simply put, the aging phenomenon is a myth. Canadian society is not going to go broke overnight due to rapidly aging people clogging up our hospitals and

Some tsunami. Yet the myth continues. If there is a lot of profit to be made in telling healthy people they're sick, there's even more political capital to be made in blaming aging boomers, rather than business opportunists, for the perceived problem of health care sustainability.

Let's not fault politicians for swallowing popular myths, but we can and should fault them for making health care funding decisions based on mythical thinking. Later this year, the BC government will make a major sea-change in its coverage of Alzheimer's drugs, a decision that may cost BC taxpayers as much as \$30 million per year. The cholinesterase inhibitors, the key drugs for Alzheimer's disease – Aricept, Exelon and Reminyl – cost about \$5 per pill. These drugs are covered in other provinces, but not in BC. This has had the drug-funded groups, the specialists and the manufacturers crying foul for more than a decade. It looks like the government is about to throw in the towel.

Why BC has maintained its policy of non-coverage of Alzheimer's drugs is an interesting question. The answer is complex, but let's just say the "Left Coast" has a culture that may be marginally more successful at putting science ahead of lobbying. At least that's what Minister of Health George Abbott alluded to in the legislature when asked about BC's intransigence on Alzheimer's drugs. "What we do in an evidence-based approach is look at the efficacy



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Berry delicious summer

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

Many of us love July because it's the month when nature's berries and stone fruits are in abundance. These colourful and sweet jewels from BC's fields and orchards are little powerhouses of nutritional protection. And when it comes to nutrition, don't discount the blackberries, salmon berries and thimbleberries you'll find as you wander the trails in parks and forests.

Of the common berries, strawberries are highest in vitamin C, although, because of their seeds, raspberries contain a little more protein, iron and zinc (not that fruits have much protein). Both berries provide the mineral potassium. Blueberries are particularly high in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory components called flavonoids. The yellow and orange stone fruits (peaches and nectarines) are high in the carotenoids we convert into vitamin A and which are antioxidants. As for cherries, they are so delicious who cares? However, they are rich in vitamin C.

When combined with berries or slices of other fruits, frozen bananas make an excellent base for thick, cooling fruit shakes, smoothies and low fat "ice cream" (see recipe below). For this purpose, select ripe bananas for freezing as they are much sweeter and have a less starchy aftertaste. To prepare for freezing, first peel the bananas. (It's much harder to peel them after they are frozen.) Leave them whole or break them into chunks, place them in plastic bags or containers

and freeze. If you like, a squeeze of fresh lemon juice sprinkled on the bananas will prevent them turning brown. Frozen bananas will last several weeks, depending on their ripeness and the temperature of the freezer. Even if the bananas turn a little brown, they'll still make great smoothies and creamy desserts.

If you have a juicer, such as a Champion, you can use the blank attachment – it is also used to create nut butters – and simply feed in frozen bananas and some berries or sliced fruit. Out comes a "soft-serve," textured, creamy dessert, to be eaten right away. This makes a fun, supervised activity for a children's party; they love feeding the fruit and frozen bananas into the top of the machine and watching the ice cream come out below. This treat is loaded with vitamins, antioxidants and protective phytochemicals, instead of saturated fat.

The recipe below is from the internationally-loved nutrition and recipe classic *Becoming Vegetarian* (Melina and Davis, Wiley Canada, 2003). You also will find terrific and healthy recipes for frozen popsicles in *Raising Vegetarian Children* (Stepaniak and Melina, McGraw-Hill, 2003).

Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian in Langley BC and co-author of seven food and nutrition classics. She regularly consults for people who wish to improve their health or for those in dietary transition. www.nutrispeak.com, vesanto@nutrispeak.com, 604-882-6782.



Berry Delicious Ice Dream

This creamy, sweet "ice cream" is sure to be a favourite with those who want to avoid dairy products, fat or excessive calories. You won't be disappointed; it is bursting with "real" fruit flavour. Serve it to guests in fancy sherbet glasses for a refreshing summer treat.

3 frozen bananas
1 cup (250 ml) fresh or frozen berries (raspberries, strawberries or blueberries)
1 cup (250 ml) fortified soymilk or soy yogurt
2 tbsp (30 ml) frozen juice concentrate (orange, citrus blend, peach or mango)

Variation: Replace some or all of the berries with slices of other frozen fruit such as peaches, kiwi, mango or melon.

Place frozen bananas, berries and soymilk (or yogurt) in a blender or food processor and process at high speed until thoroughly smooth. A sturdy blender is ideal, but many food processors work well too. (If your blender struggles to blend this mixture, partially thawing the fruit, especially the strawberries, will help.) Serve immediately. Top with nuts or fresh berries, if desired. Makes three cups.

Per cup (analyzed with fortified vanilla soymilk): calories: 200; protein: 4 g; fat: 2 g; carbohydrate: 45 g; dietary fibre: 6 g; calcium: 126 mg; iron: 1.3 mg; magnesium: 67 mg; sodium: 51 mg; zinc: 0.6 mg; folate: 73 mcg; riboflavin: 0.2 mg; vitamin B12: 1 mcg; vitamin C: 37 mg; vitamin E: 0.6 mg; % calories from protein: 8%; fat: 9%; carbohydrate: 83%.



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Canadian health food industry crisis

by Peter Helgason

The Canadian health food industry is facing a crisis. As consumers, retailers, distributors and manufacturers, we have been duped into a losing game of progressive incrementalism. Dangling carrots of "approved claims" and "increased consumer confidence", a succession of federal governments have fronted an odious policy from the senior levels of the Health Canada bureaucracy, a policy that has had the reverse effect.

The "unmoved mover" behind the policy is the bureaucratic zeal to bind Canada to international standards, promulgated by international agencies, whose existence and power are directly proportional to their capacity to benefit global industry.

The reality for the plutocrats who seek to destroy our domestic health food business is that our legal system is stacked against them. In our British legacy system, we have a "black list" system of regulation: unless it is specifically forbidden it is allowed, with legal remedies if the restriction is deemed by the courts as arbitrary or impinging upon our God-given rights.

Our bureaucrats want us to "harmonize" our regulations with the irreconcilable, European (Napoleonic Code) "white list" system: unless it is specifically allowed, it is forbidden, with no right of appeal as your rights are a gift from the state, not a birthright.

The new policy is always "just about ready" and promises pie-in-the sky rewards for the health food industry and consumer alike. In reality, the situation always gets worse. Small manufacturers, overwhelmed with regulatory burden, fail. Products disappear from shelves. Consumer choice is limited. Importers wind up competing against grey-market, same-label goods at discount prices because not all importers follow the same rules. Enforcement is uneven.

In June of 1997, Freedom of Choice in Health Care filed suit against Health Canada in Ontario Provincial Court. It was challenging Health Canada's imposition of Site Licensing Fees on the manufacturers of health foods. It argued that Health Canada bureaucrats could not impose a new tax based on regulation, and that only parliament had the power to tax. This forced the Chrétien government to rethink its position, ultimately withdrawing the proposed regulation and embarking on one of the federal government's largest ever public consultations.

The Standing Committee on Health held public meetings from coast to coast; MPs heard directly from hundreds of stakeholders and received more than one million "sincere constituent contacts" and hundreds of thousands of petitions

supporting personal freedom of choice in the use of health foods.

This led to the publication of the *New Vision* report and the subsequent *Transition Team Report* and the establishment of the Office of Natural Health (ONHP), currently known as the Natural Health Products Directorate (NHPD). Although the report is long on detail and covers many issues addressed by the existing regulatory scheme, one of the main recommendations is the striking down of Schedule A and Section 3.1 and 3.2 of the Food and Drug Act. (Schedule A is a list of about 40 diseases and Sections 3.1 and 3.2 make it an offence to advertise or sell to the general public any product that prevents, treats or cures any of the diseases listed on Schedule A.)

The other main point of the report is that health foods should be regulated differently than drugs and that any regulation recognize the product's "wide margins of safety" and the freedom of informed individuals to have free access to the products of their choice for self-care.

In December of 2001, the Proposed Regulatory Framework for the regulation of health foods, which, with no legislative authority, it referred to as Natural Health Products, was published in the *Canada Gazette*. The proposed regulatory scheme was universally attacked as a betrayal of the Standing Committee report and even of the significantly watered down 53 Recommendations which were purported to summarize the *New Vision* report.

After more than a year of foot-dragging and fighting on the part of Health Canada, Private Members Bill C-420 was given first reading in the House in March of 2003. The bill sought to do by legislation what the bureaucrats were stifling. Namely, to treat the products more like food and get rid of sections 3.1 and 3.2. Grudgingly, an amended *Gazette* was published in June 2003 and an impossible task, a task designed to fail, was shouldered by the under-funded, under-staffed NHPD.

Steady parliamentary pressure and scrutiny was applied to the Health Canada's corporate cabal and in a testament to widespread parliamentary dissatisfaction, Bill C-420 passed second reading by a well-briefed House in October of 2003, with all-party support and hundreds of thousands of petitions.

With the June 2004 election, C-420 died on the order paper, but was reintroduced in Paul Martin's new parliament and given unanimous consent at second reading to go to committee and resolve the many outstanding issues with the rapidly failing new regulatory scheme.

continued on p. 39

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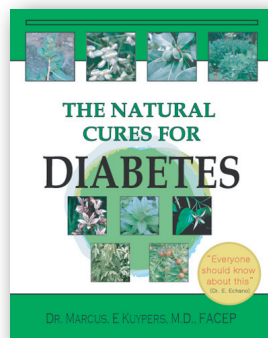
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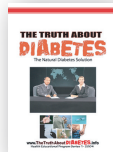
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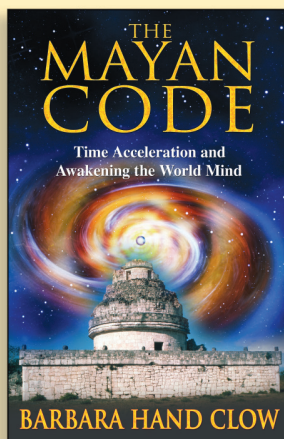
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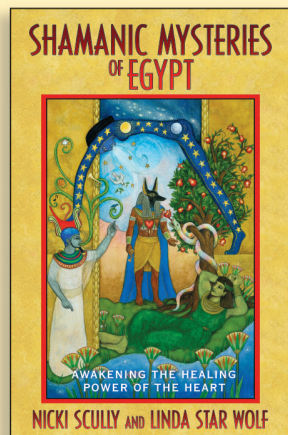
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ENVIRONMENT

When I am engaged in world-changing, I start by visualizing a future where we have created solutions to our various problems. The future will happen. Our use of fossil fuels will end because they will run out. I visualize how our world will be when we no longer use fossil fuels, and when we have learned to live within the limits of planetary sustainability.

It is easy to picture colourful neighbourhoods connected by pedestrian and bicycle trails and comfortable electric buses. If you need a car, you book one through the Co-operative Auto Network, powered by the sun, wind and ocean and bio-fuelled from sewage and waste streams. I picture thriving, local economies supported by community banks, efficient homes heated by the sun and earth, neighbourhood councils where people plan the future.

With the vision firmly in mind, I ask myself "How did we get there?" I use my imagination to identify the policies, pathways or initiatives that might have led to this turn of events.

Was it city grants for home retrofits and solar panels? Was it the success of the cycling community to win support for more cycle lanes? Maybe, but it would likely take far more to motivate a whole neighbourhood to change. Was it funding for pilot projects in which neighbours had to work together to win a prize, with goals and benchmarks to judge their success? Yes, that would be effective.

And then my mind strikes gold. It was a reality TV show called *The Glorious Neighbourhood*, in which neighbourhoods across Canada competed for a \$1 million prize. The winner was the neighbourhood that over the course of a year succeeded in persuading the greatest number of people to work together to make their homes more efficient, reduce their waste, grow more local food, leave their cars at home, install solar panels, get their children walking and cycling, establish sociable meeting places and create places of beauty where there used to be neglect. City contestants had to live within a 10-minute walk of each other; rural contestants within a 10-minute bike ride.

After the elimination rounds, 26 neighbourhoods were given \$10,000 each to plan their activities and film their progress and every week the nation tuned in to watch.

As the competition increased, local businesses chipped in with gifts of equipment and cash. School children volunteered to dig people's gardens and city engineers offered to help redesign local roads to make them safe for bicycles. Churches opened their doors for Sunday community feasts, regardless of faith, and teenagers created ride-sharing websites. City councillors were astounded by the enthusiasm with which people offered their help and the speed at which drug dealers were driven out, homeless people were found places to live and plots of vacant land were converted into flourishing gardens.

After six months, a group was eliminated each week until a neighbourhood in Ontario that had involved more than 2,000 people won the \$1 million prize. It

then invested it in a trust fund to pay for scholarships and grants for the children of their neighbourhood.

The TV contest was repeated, but the impulse had

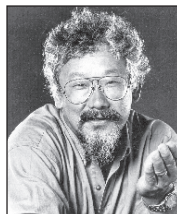
been sparked. All across Canada, city challenges were initiated and neighbourhoods competed for prizes donated by businesses, councils and the elderly. The country was afire with change – but why?

It happened because the greatest secret of sustainability had been revealed: that the process of becoming sustainable was enormous fun. It brought people together and restored a deeply missed sense of community. It also reduced crime.

But above all, it gave people a sense of hope. No longer passive onlookers at their own collective funeral, people were active and engaged. They abandoned their TVs for the pleasure of rebuilding their neighbourhoods and crafting a world in which their children could live with similar hope. And in so doing, they changed everything.

It's a good approach because it starts with the belief that success is possible. Now, does anyone know a TV director who might be inspired to take this on?

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org) and co-author of the new book *Cancer: 101 Solutions to a Preventable Epidemic* (New Society Publishers). www.earthfuture.com



GM crops like it or not

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki

Did you know that genetically modified or “transgenic” crops are now commonplace on North American farms? According to a recent survey in the US, the majority of Americans have no idea just how pervasive this technology has become. In fact, North Americans have been eating transgenic foods and using products made from their crops for over a decade. So what kind of effect, for better or worse, are these crops having on the environment?

One of the major concerns many ecologists had a decade ago was that transgenic organisms could inadvertently disrupt ecosystems by harming other organisms. Some transgenic crops, for example, have been engineered to resist certain types of herbicide. This allows farmers to liberally spray their fields with the herbicide, knowing it won't harm their target crop.

field has found that these types of crops appear, at least on the surface, to be less harmful to insects than farming methods that use insecticides/ This report, recently published in the journal *Science*, looked at 42 field experiments and found that fields of Bt cotton and maize contained more non-pest insects than those that used insecticides to control pests. Of course, insecticide-free control fields still had the greatest number of insects overall. The authors point out that further studies to examine the impact on specific species of insects, rather than just all invertebrates, are essential to better understand the environmental impact of these crops.

Disturbingly, the researchers had to resort to obtaining much of their information on Bt crops through the U.S. Freedom of Information Act because the companies that produced them did not publically disclose it. The researchers

Transgenic crops are not simple products like widgets, ipods or even automobiles. They are living organisms that can interact with other creatures in the environment in myriad ways.

These concerns were apparently warranted; farm-scale evaluations two years ago in the UK of some transgenic crops found that vigorous application of herbicides was damaging to the diversity of life forms around farms. That's because many of the weeds killed by the herbicides were important for butterflies and bees. Populations of these pollinators on the test farms fell, possibly having other more wide-ranging implications up the food chain for birds and mammals.

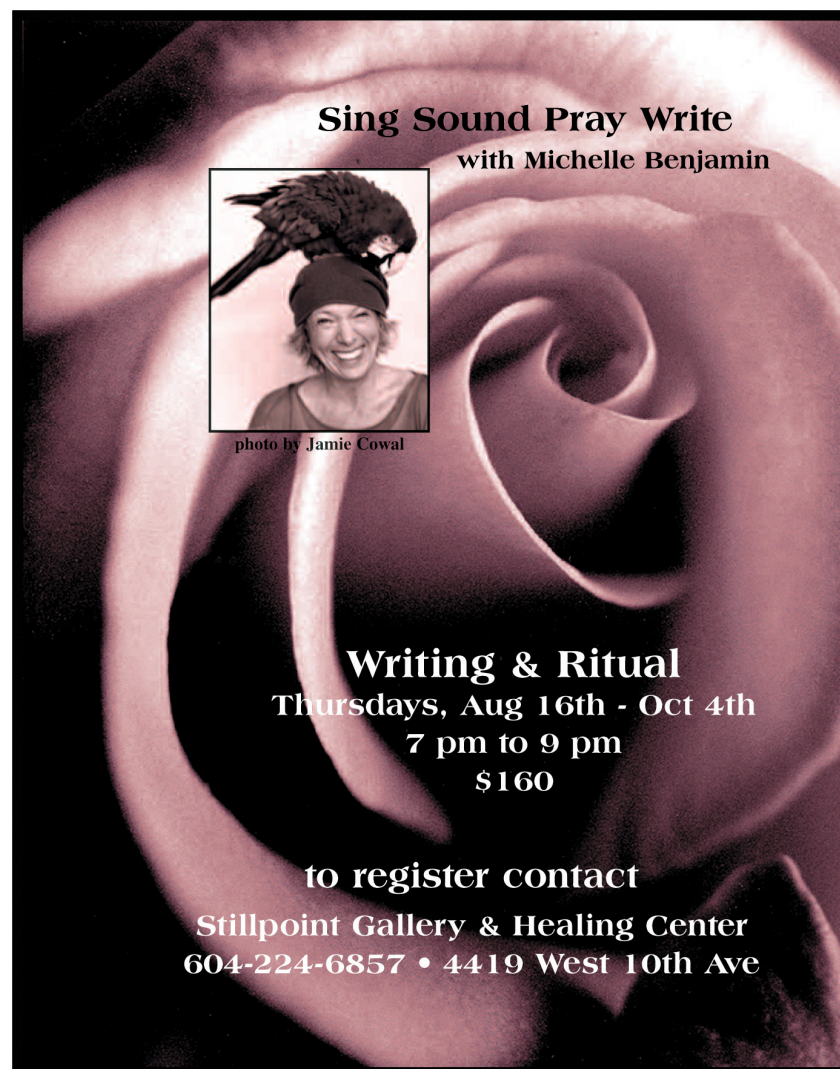
Another common type of transgenic crop has an insecticide “built-in.” These crops have been genetically engineered to produce an insecticidal toxin that wards off pests. One of the most well known has been engineered using a certain kind of bacterium called Bt. The advantage, in theory, is that Bt crops do not need to be sprayed with an insecticide to kill pests, and thus could be potentially cheaper and more environmentally friendly than their contemporary, non-transgenic counterparts.

Concerns were raised, however, when lab tests showed that pollen from Bt crops could be potentially harmful to non-target insects, making them grow more slowly or reproduce less often. However, a new meta-analysis of the effects of Bt cotton and Bt maize on non-target insects in the

also note that the debate around transgenic crops has been a heated and emotional one: “However, in the case of GM crops, scientific analyses have also been deficient. In particular, many experiments used to test the environmental safety of GM crops were poorly replicated, were of short duration and/or assessed only a few of the possible response variables. Much could be learned and perhaps some debates settled if there were credible quantitative analyses of the numerous experiments that have contrasted the ecological impact of GM crops with those of control treatments involving non-GM varieties.”

Transgenic crops are not simple products like widgets, ipods or even automobiles. They are living organisms that can interact with other creatures in the environment in myriad ways. Nature is complicated. When you modify an organism at a genetic level, it shouldn't surprise anyone that the results are also complicated and often unexpected. Transgenic crops are, in many ways, radically new and should be subject to the greatest of scientific scrutiny, not suppressed by proprietary concerns.

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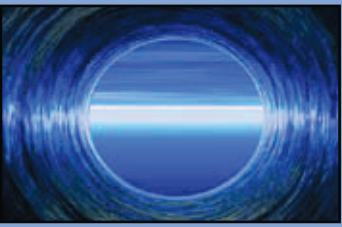
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E-waste

the dirty little secret

We're cozy with our electronics. We give them names and sit them on our laps. They wake us up in the morning, fix us coffee, bring the newspaper and bear messages from lovers. What we might not know, however, is that computer components play host to some of the most persistent pollutants found in the biosphere.

Ingredients read like a Borgian cocktail menu. Mercury in LCD screens can cause central nervous system and kidney damage. Monitors and circuit boards contain lead, which damages brains and kidneys and poisons the blood. Lead, along with barium, protects users from radiation while sitting in front of the computer; encounter it in your air, water or food and it will damage your internal organs. Cadmium is part of the phosphor compound inside CRT monitors. Inhaled, it can cause severe respiratory distress, emphysema, even death. It accumulates along the food chain, particularly in wheat, rice and potatoes and the tissue of shellfish. When ingested, it disrupts the functioning of the liver, bones and kidneys. It's also a carcinogen, along with beryllium on motherboards and toner from printers.

Computers are manufactured cheaply in poor countries, due to less stringent environmental standards and loose occupational regulations. Consumers in wealthier countries enjoy the benign phase of the IT life-cycle, as toxins squirreled away inside hardware remain quiescent until disturbed.

Friendly fire

Particularly problematic are polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), flame retardants impregnated in the plastic of electronics. They're used in everything from coffee makers to computers. Brominated flame retardants are rising stars on the global pollutant charts. Close chemical cousins of PCBs, they're endocrine disruptors, confounding hormones and reproductive systems after they leach into the environment. When burned or buried, they can become dioxins, which cause DNA mutation.

According to Health Canada, Canadian women have PBDE levels of five to 10 times higher than women in any other industrial country. In Europe, between 47,000 to 95,000 square kilometres are already known to be contaminated by hazardous wastes. Countries such as the Netherlands have spent over a billion dollars to minimize and collect dioxin from incinerators, but still have to contend with hazardous emissions and disposal of toxic ashes.

Modern, programmable computers were first created about 70 years ago.



Market scavenger boy, Alaba market, Lagos, Nigeria. © Images courtesy Basel Action Network

Regrettably, modern sustainability has lagged at a glacial pace. Ten years ago, the average life span of a computer was six years. Now it's two. Canadians generate 70,000 tons of computer garbage annually, equal to about 2,800,000 computers. UN figures say 50 million tonnes of e-waste are generated yearly.

Welcome to the garden path. Your guides? Microsoft, Apple & Co. Software and hardware are both often designed to become obsolete in a fixed time frame, a profit-exploiting strategy called planned obsolescence.

A recent survey by Softchoice Corporation found that only half of all business computers in North America meet the minimum requirements for Microsoft's new operating system, Vista. Currently, only five percent of computers in England can run its full features. Thus the term "the Vista layer," Greenpeace's vision of future archaeologists unearthing mounds of abruptly discarded systems.

Vista's demanding system requirements can be largely traced to features designed to monitor and control users' behaviour, all in the name of protecting Microsoft from software piracy. Despite its notorious bugs, security holes and incompatibility, many consumers feel like they have no choice but to junk their computer and upgrade. The city of Vancouver plans to spend over \$7 million to switch to Vista.

Think Apple is better? That's what their marketing department would have you believe. Apple fashionista hardware is heavily proprietary, making replacement parts expensive and non-interchangeable. The iPod is a textbook example, where a replacement battery is not as cost-effective as buying a whole new iPod, and seductive new releases are constant.

Fun for the whole family

In North America, unwanted hardware is often thrown in municipal landfills, or stored by folks who are unsure about just where it should go. More conscientious consumers deliver their materials to recyclers. "Recycler" sounds green and friendly. Unfortunately, about 80 percent of this hardware heads directly offshore to poorer countries, usually China. There, "recycling" generally consists of haphazard dumping, burning and picking-through by unprotected workers.

Conditions are grim. Circuit boards are held over coal fires to melt off the lead solder. Hydrochloric acid solutions in open vats are sloshed over chips and cards to remove the gold, and poured into the nearest water supply or onto the ground. Piles of wires are burned. Monitors tubes are smashed with hammers to recover the copper yoke, exposing workers to phosphor compounds. Leftover leaded glass and plastic junk are dumped in irrigation canals or fields.

In the notorious Chinese city of Guiyu

alone, the e-waste industry is estimated to be worth CDN\$140 million. About the size of North Vancouver, Guiyu's 5,500 family-based operations process one million tonnes of e-waste yearly. Guiyu bloodstreams are laden with lead, according to a 2006 study by Shantou University Medical College. Local creeks have the Ph level of strong acids.

Award-winning Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky seduced the public's eye with beautiful, terrible images of industrial wastelands around the world. Many of these are e-waste sites; certainly they are not the usual images evoked by the term "recycling."

The dirty little secret

Electronic trash is now considered the most heavily traded toxic waste in the world. In 1992, Canada ratified the Basel Convention, agreeing not to ship hazardous waste to poorer countries. In 1996, China prohibited the import of e-waste. Yet business continues to boom.

Watchdog organizations like the Basel Action Network (BAN) point to a lack of enforcement. Its investigations of e-waste dumping abuses sent a wake-up call to the international community; it also advocates for the use of non-toxic materials in computer manufacturing and a crack-down on rampant smuggling.

Unscrupulous exporters physically hide or euphemize the contents of shipments, referring to toxic waste as "recy-

clables” or “plastic waste.” More cynically, they pretend that shipments are bound for repair or charitable re-use abroad. About 75 percent of the computers sent to cities like Lagos, Nigeria, for this purpose is irredeemable junk on arrival.

Founder and environmental justice activist Jim Puckett was instrumental in ensuring the Basel Convention had teeth. He speaks plainly about the disappointing lack of scrutiny, particularly in North America.

“Until recently, nobody bothered to enforce the rules even though Canada is a Party to the Basel Convention... The dirty little secret is that the electronics manufacturers and governments and a cadre of unscrupulous recyclers are all benefiting immensely via an illicit traffic in hazardous waste electronics that moves largely from Canada and the United States to countries like Nigeria, India, Pakistan and especially to China... Toxic waste, if left to a *free market*, will follow the path of least resistance.”

While Environment Canada has begun to investigate outgoing containers in the Port of Vancouver, he says that smugglers know their chances of getting caught are “slim.”

The more things change

There is good news. As of this August, old electronics will be turned away from BC landfills. Consumers will pay a fee when buying new goods, financing new end-of-life depots that handle e-waste. The program is being conducted by Electronics Stewardship Association of British Columbia (ESABC) and will be managed and administered by Encorp, of bottle-depot fame. A commitment has been made to not export to poorer nations; most probably, all materials will be incinerated on Canadian soil. For many sustainability advocates, it is bittersweet news. Producers who continue to use hazardous materials are still not held accountable for environmental costs. Local recyclers will be left out of the loop. While superficially attractive as a form of zero waste, incineration is controversial and hardly considered innovative.

Worse, no provision has been made for re-use, the most direct form of sustainability. British Columbians who cannot afford a computer will continue to be left behind. Re-use reduces consumption and prevents waste and also conserves resources required to manufacture new goods. The ESABC plan is starting to come under fire by non-profits and community organisations for ignoring both recycling and re-use alternatives to incineration. Our grandmothers knew that an ounce of waste prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Ifny Lachance is a founding director of Free Geek Community Technology Centre in Vancouver. She hosts the Pedal Revolutionary Radio Show on CiTR. She can be found riding her bicycle or glued to her computer.

What you can do

Re-use: However good your intentions, you should never leave your old computer equipment in an alley, exposing it to the neighbourhood kids and the elements. Give it to a friend or a re-use organization like Computers for Schools (www.cfsbc.ca) or Free Geek Community Technology Centre (freegeekvancouver.org). Repair or replace parts rather than entire systems whenever possible. Consider buying refurbished systems from reputable organizations instead of new.

Reduce: Resist the pressures of planned obsolescence and the temptation to prematurely upgrade. Consider sustainable software like Ubuntu or Open Office that extend the capacity of hardware. Try to use a multi-use product, instead of many items that have one function. Buy from computer companies with more responsible practices like take-back programs and non-toxic ingredient research. Beware “greenwashing” and consult consumer and environmental advocacy groups before you buy.

Recycle: Before you give up your hardware to a recycler, do your research. What is a company’s environmental/business record? Where does it send its materials? Be aware that materials can pass through many hands, and companies themselves may be unaware or even mislead you intentionally. Use Google and watchdog organizations like the Basel Action Network as informative resources (www.ban.org).



‘Removing the Cause’ Yields Success

“It no longer matters what you call your disease. The label your doctor gives you is meaningless. What matters is what caused it. The aggressive lowering of huge amounts of hidden heavy metals has turned around the worst heart diseases or improved memory, mood and IQ of those who are well. It is one of the most important decisions of your life.”



Heavy metals hide in the bones. Unfortunately as folks age, they tend to get lower in minerals, leading to bone loss and osteoporosis. Along with this, the heavy metals start to leach out of the bone storage and land in important organs, like blood vessels, heart, kidney and more, triggering high blood pressure, heart disease with various names like angina, arrhythmias or congestive heart failure, or they get cancers from these metals, too.

For decades folks have literally saved their lives with IV chelation. However, blood studies reveal that plasticizers from the IV bags and tubing accumulate in the blood stream and later end up contaminating the rest of the body (and causing high blood pressure).

So as life saving as EDTA chelation has been, it is time-consuming, difficult, unphysiologic, potentially dangerous and expensive. But fortunately, a method of using patented chelation suppositories has opened up the whole world of heavy metal detoxification, making it available to everyone.” – **Dr. Sherry Rogers, M.D.**

Angina, Blood Pressure, Blocked Arteries, Cholesterol

‘I have 10 patients on Detoxamin and it is working great. Personally, I have been taking 40 milligrams of blood pressure medication to try and control my high blood pressure but it has not been working. My blood pressure has been in the range of 165/100, but after using Detoxamin for only 2 months, my blood pressure has dropped significantly to about 130/75.’ – *Dr. Ray Pearson, DC, Harrison, AR*

‘Detoxamin has pretty much saved my life. I have used 90 sup?positories over the past year and it has cleaned out my femoral arteries (which had been 60-70 percent blocked) and my carotid arteries that were blocked as well. My blood pressure has gone from 140 to about 110 and I no longer need to take my blood-pressure medication. My cholesterol numbers have dropped as well!’ – *Jack Yates, Vashon, WA*

‘I have 87-year-old patient who has 85% blockage in two coronary arteries. Doctors would not operate due to the high risk of his medical condition. He couldn’t walk out to mailbox without suffering symptoms of angina. After a few months on Detoxamin chelation suppositories, he can now mow the lawn without any symptoms of angina or numbness in his arms.’ – *Dr. James Bentz, Anacortes, WA*

‘I had had 80% blockage of my carotid arteries before using Detoxamin. After using just 60 suppositories, my blockage is down to 40% in each artery according to my doctor-administered ultrasound.’ – *John Scheuerman, Boxford, MA*

‘Within one month of using Detoxamin chelation suppositories, my blood pressure has gone from 145/96 to 120/80. I am a smoker and my lungs are clearing up. I would wheeze when I laid down for bed, and I no longer wheeze. I know it is the Detoxamin chelation suppositories because it is the only thing I am doing differently.’ – *Dr. Bob, Philadelphia, PA*

‘After two weeks on Detoxamin chelation suppositories, my blood pressure decreased to the point where I could stop taking my blood pressure medication. Also before and after hair tests, my mercury, lead and nickel all dropped down significantly to well below the preference range.’ – *Charles Peterson, Escondido, CA*

‘A 71-year-old patient after one month on Detoxamin no longer has to take nitroglycerin for angina.’ – *Dr. Robert Meliodon, Huntington Valley, PA*

In a recent study (02/07) the half-life of EDTA in the blood was 8 hours after administration of a chelation suppository vs. 1.5 hours after IV chelation. This is one more reason why Kelatox or Detoxamin are superior to IV chelation!



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Canada's role in depleted uranium weapons worldwide

by Alfred Lambremont Webre, JD, MEd

The Government of Canada is in non-compliance with the statutes and regulations of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), prohibiting the use of Canadian uranium in depleted uranium (DU) weapons. Moreover, Canada has a bilateral nuclear co-operation agreement with the US, under which uranium exports to the US may only be used for peaceful purposes, and not in weapons. This includes "control over the high enrichment of Canadian uranium and subsequent storage and use of the highly enriched uranium," a Foreign Affairs document states. The same rules that apply to uranium apply to depleted uranium, according to the CNSC.

DU weapons are considered weapons of mass destruction under international law. Thus Canada may be complicit in the US use of weapons of mass destruction in the 1991 Iraq war I, the 1998 Balkans war, the 2001 war in Afghanistan, and the 2003 Iraq war II, where the British medical journal *Lancet* estimates that one million civilians have died. In each of these wars, it is likely that depleted uranium in the DU weapons used by the U.S. and the UK comes from Canadian uranium exported to the US and processed in US enrichment plants into depleted uranium and subsequently manufactured into DU weapons.

Depleted uranium is the uranium by-product that remains after the removal of the isotope U-235 during the enrichment process. For every ton of enriched U-235 uranium for the nuclear weapons and nuclear power industries, seven tons of depleted uranium containing the U-238 isotope are made for the munitions, DU weapons, and military armor industries. "Depleted uranium" is a marketing term of the nuclear industry. U-238 depleted uranium was originally discovered as a poison gas weapon of mass destruction during World War II by the Manhattan Project, at the same time as the atomic bomb and Agent Orange. Because DU is pyrophoric, it bursts into high-temperature decomposition upon impact with military armour, releasing nanoparticles of ionizing radiation that contaminate all living things and the environment with deadly radiation with a half-life of 4.5 billion years. The public military excuse for the use of DU munitions, bombs and kinetic penetrators is that DU is heavy and easily penetrates military armour and other targets. The covert strategic military use of DU munitions, smart bombs, and cruise missiles is radiation contamination of terrain, and low level nuclear war against enemy troops, civilian pop-

ulations, and all unprotected military troops, for purposes of depopulation.

DU weapons & war crimes

After 3 years of investigation by 60 expert witnesses and jurists at a cost of \$1 million raised by Japanese citizens, the International Criminal Tribunal For Afghanistan at Tokyo on March 10, 2004 found President George W. Bush guilty of the war crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes for the use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons by US forces in the 2001 war against Afghanistan.

Experts agree that a substantial portion of the depleted uranium in the DU weapons used by the US in Afghanistan came from Canadian uranium. Had the Tokyo Tribunal been diligent, it could have found Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, who resigned as Prime Minister on December 12, 2003, guilty as an accessory to genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, for failing to enforce Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission regulations, and the Canada-US Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, both of which prohibit Canadian uranium from being used in DU weapons.

Dr. Gordon Edwards, president of the Montreal-based Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility (CCNR) says, "Canada may have the policy, but it's not enforced. The Canadian government is taking directions and orders from the nuclear industry..." "The uranium industry has a vested interest in ensuring its depleted uranium waste makes a profit and is not just left in storage. That's why some of Canada's depleted uranium is ending up in weapons, Edwards says. "The Canadian government can't even think for themselves."

Depleted uranium in Hawaii

The depleted uranium that has contaminated the Hawaiian Islands with deadly radiation most probably has a Canadian uranium source. It is highly probable that the depleted uranium in DU munitions fired at bases on the Big Island and at military bases on Oahu, and in the nuclear weapons stored at Pearl Harbour is derived from Canadian uranium, exported to the US and processed into enriched uranium and DU.

Public health effects of DU weapons

The public health and environmental effects of the use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons can be considered *per se* violations of the war crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes under the Statute of the International Criminal Court. The demonstrated public health effects of depleted uranium (DU) weapons include: diabetes, cancer, birth

defects, chronic diseases caused by neurological and neuromuscular radiation damage, mitochondrial diseases (chronic fatigue syndrome, Lou Gehrig's, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, heart and brain disorders), global DNA damage in men's sperm, infertility in women, learning disabilities (such as autism and dyslexia), mental illness, infant mortality and low birth weights, increase in death rates and decrease in birth rates.

The Prime Minister stonewalls

So far, the Conservative government and the Liberal opposition have failed to take a public position on Canada's failure to stop the illegal use of its uranium in DU weapons. Stephen Harper refused to allow any Conservative MPs to appear on a June 13, 2007 North American radio special programme on the Canadian DU issue. Despite repeated conversations with Stephane Dion's personal press attaché and attempts to reach Liberal MP and Foreign Affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh, the Liberal Party chose not to send a representative to the Canadian DU radio programme. Liberal MP Dr. Keith Martin, MD, a physician and former Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Defence in the Paul Martin Government, appeared on a radio programme on the Canadian DU issue and stated that in his opinion, there were no adverse public health consequences to the use of DU weapons.

By contrast, at a May 12, 2007 Uranium-free BC Forum at the Brilliant Centre in Castlegar, BC, NDP MP Alex Atamanenko (Southern Interior) publicly stated he was opposed to the use of Canadian uranium in DU weapons. Atamanenko seeks Canadian legislation banning DU weapons, as Belgium has passed. On the June 13, 2007 Canadian DU radio programme, Atamanenko publicly committed to question the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on why Canada was not enforcing its regulations and treaty obligations against the use of its uranium in DU weapons. Connie Fogal, Leader of the Canadian Action Party, which passed a resolution in support of Canadian legislation outlawing DU weapons, committed to work against the use of Canadian DU in American weapons. Adriane Carr, Deputy Leader of the Green Party of Canada likewise committed to demand enforcement of Canada's prohibitions against use of its uranium in DU weapons.

What path is Canada taking?

Unbeknownst to the public, the Government of Canada seems to have strayed into aiding and abetting the serious war crimes of DU-induced genocide

and crimes against humanity. By contrast, British Columbia has maintained a moratorium on uranium mining since the 1970s. There is substantial community support for a permanent ban on uranium exploration and mining in BC, as the recent Uranium-free BC Forum in Castlegar suggested. The detrimental impacts of uranium exploration and mining on public health and the environment is the driving force behind the ban.

Under the guise of combating climate change, the nuclear industry, led by the Bush Administration, is now promoting nuclear power plants to the tiger economies of India, China, Japan, and South Korea. Because of ionizing radiation and the nuclear waste issue, this amounts to a low level nuclear war against these populations. NASA recently reported vast uranium deposits in Kazakhstan and Afghanistan. Kazakhstan is expected to out-produce Canada (now the world's top producer) in uranium production within 12 years.

One might rationally ask: Why not ban uranium exploration and mining in BC, and organize collectively to secure a uranium exploration and mining ban in Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec? The public policy reasons for the ban on uranium exploration and mining in the rest of Canada – public health and environment – are equally valid throughout Canada, as they are in BC.

Let's sunset our Canadian uranium industry. That is a practical way to save the health of Canadians, the environment, and innocent victims worldwide.



Alfred Lambremont Webre, JD, MEd is the International Director of the Institute for Cooperation in Space (ICIS), and a Judge on the Kuala Lumpur International War Crimes Tribunal. Alfred can be reached at peace@peaceinspace.org. Website at www.peaceinspace.org. For nuclear info visit www.ccnr.org

Global Habitat Festival

by Lorien Henson

In early December of 2006, my co-founder of LimeLight, Michael Ryniker, and I saw Dr. David Suzuki speak to a packed downtown church in Vancouver. David Suzuki spoke so passionately about protecting the environment and one thing that really stood out for us during his talk was the first of the 3 R's – "Reduce." He encouraged people to reduce, such as reducing buying more stuff, size of home and size of vehicle. We were inspired to create an outdoor music, art and eco-lifestyle festival. We wanted to raise public awareness about solutions to climate change and inspire people to be part of the solution by making meaningful and lasting changes in their lives.

Michael and I soon developed a vision for the festival and started some preliminary planning when in late February 2007 Al Gore announced the monumental Live Earth concerts. We thought that the city of Vancouver would get picked up for the line-up or someone else would head up the role to produce a supporting event for Live Earth. Our festival was shelved until mid-May when it became clear that

no organization - government, corporate or non-profit - was planning anything in Vancouver and possibly all of Canada for Live Earth. We decided to tweak our festival to include Live Earth and pitch the idea to various environmental groups in Vancouver to see what the interest was. From the get-go, we made it clear that this event was doable only with a lot of individuals volunteering their time, talent and expertise. The response to contribute has been overwhelmingly positive.

It's an ambitious project and timelines are ridiculous. We invite all Canadians to be part of Live Earth, a monumental global movement that can inspire a tipping point. It's only possible to make this event a reality through combined efforts of all of us.

The festival is financed with the gracious support of our sponsors. Limelight took the lead, but it's a real community effort to make this event a reality. The famous Margaret Mead quote is a motivator: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."



Global Habitat Festival

Inspiring Solutions to Climate Change
Global Habitat Festival is a free Friends of Live Earth outdoor music festival in Vancouver on July 7, 2007.

This event features live music, art, an eco-village and live coverage of the monumental global event Live Earth. Global Habitat Festival aims to raise public awareness about solutions to climate change and inspire people to be part of the solution by making meaningful and lasting changes in their lives.

Saturday, July 7, 2007

Venue Robson Square, 12:00 Noon - 9:00 pm
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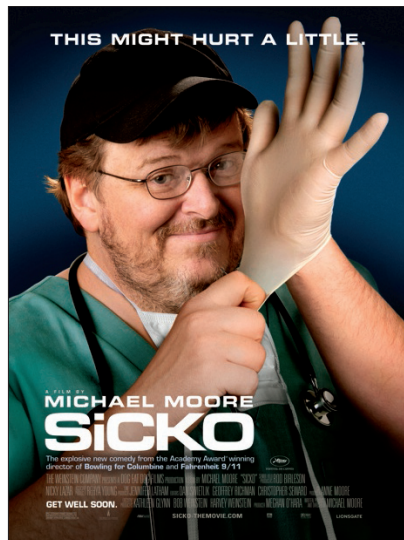
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SICKO

Underbelly of US private health care exposed



For those of you who've been living in a monastery for the last 10 years, Michael Moore is probably the most famous documentary filmmaker in American history. His body of work includes the feature-length documentaries *Roger and Me*, *Bowling for Columbine* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*. He also produced and starred in a TV series called *The Awful Truth*.

Basically, Moore is a political activist who uses moving pictures to get his point across. And he's very, very good at what he does. So good that he's won both an American Oscar and the Palme d'Or from the Cannes Film Festival. He's also the only documentary filmmaker ever invited to Cannes.

Sicko sounds like the title of a bad, B-list horror movie, and the truth is it really is a horror movie of sorts. It's about the wealthiest, most technologically advanced and powerful empire in

the Democrats and Republicans – than they are in helping the little guy. And boy, does he ever make that point well.

The movie opens with a man named Adam who is sitting at home with a needle and thread, sewing together a gash on his leg the width of his kneecap because he can't afford health insurance. Adam and tens of millions of people like him in America have no access to basic medical care because wages minus cost of living doesn't leave them enough money to get health care. And even when they can afford insurance, they often find that the insurance company or HMO attaches deductibles and additional expenses for care which are too high for the average American to keep up with.

The movie opens with a man named Adam who is sitting at home with a needle and thread, sewing together a gash on his leg the width of his kneecap because he can't afford health insurance.

One of the biggest problems Americans face today is being rejected by health insurance providers. The system is completely privatized and companies use a set of standards designed to create barriers which prevent many of the people who need health care the most from acquiring health insurance. The roadblocks have to be seen to be believed, and Moore manages to show the viewer the underbelly of for-profit health care in a way few others could.

He drives the point home by traveling across the globe to compare health care in the US to that of Canada, France

reveal how he accomplishes this, but in my opinion, he's probably going to score big points in the last third of the film with people who consider themselves centrist and conservative. If you're a fence sitter, go see this movie; it may just convince you that even if you're opposed to socialism, socialized medicine may not be communism, after all. This is a very powerful film. It opens strong and keeps getting stronger all the way to the end. And man, what an ending! No spoilers from me. You're going to have to see it.

At the time of writing this review, the US State Department had been persecuting Moore and considering prosecuting him for visiting Cuba without

with the failings of the US healthcare system, both real and perceived. But this time around, the controversial documentarian seems to be letting the subject matter do the talking, and in the process shows a new maturity...

Anthony Kaufman of the *Wall Street Journal* says, "After the screening, several hard-nosed US critics and journalists admitted to crying during the film. The 'straight-from-the-heart' approach of *Sicko*, as described in press notes, is less confrontational than what many audiences have come to expect from the director of *Bowling for Columbine* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*."

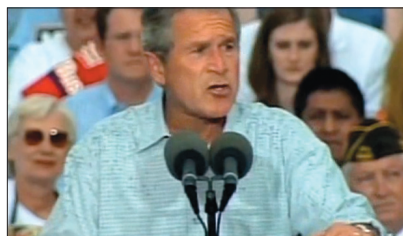
Many of you may have already seen *Sicko*; it's been available for download on Usenet and P2P Bit Torrent networks since June 12. Moore says that he has no problems with people downloading and sharing his movie because he doesn't agree with existing copyright laws. I admit I was one of those downloaders. But I'm going to pay the price of admission in theatres anyway, during the first weekend, to help Moore and the Weinstein Company keep on making these great and important films. So I'm asking all the P2P downloaders out there – you know who you are – to pay for a ticket to *Sicko* on its opening weekend by buying a ticket online.

Sicko is a great film that everyone should see. It's both shocking and embarrassing, but in typical Michael Moore fashion, it's also hilarious at times. Moore manages to retain his sense of humour and keep the viewer entertained, through what could have been two very depressing hours in the hands of another director. And unless



human history – an empire that Caesar or Genghis Khan would have been envious of – which, at the same time, is also the worst nation in the Western world when it comes to looking after its own people.

One of the points Moore makes in the film is that his government seems more interested in helping the big insurance and pharmaceutical companies – the ones that give millions in campaign finance to



and the UK. He uses his own government's statistics to make the point and he also manages to demonstrate that socialized medicine doesn't equate to doctors living in poverty, by any stretch of the imagination. He makes a very strong case for universal health care, probably the strongest case I've ever seen.

In fact, Moore makes the case so well that it may even sway people who are socially conservative. I'm not going to



it gets when it comes to the horrors of US foreign and domestic policy. But in the end, it's an important film and worth shedding a few tears over.

And you don't have to take my word for it since my words and opinions aren't worth diddly squat to Bush and Harper-loving Conservatives. According to Roger Friedman of *Fox News*, "Filmmaker Michael Moore's brilliant and uplifting new documentary *Sicko* deals



you're a diehard Reagan republican who thinks that rock'n'roll is a communist plot, this film will give you food for thought. Guaranteed.

Hsing Lee is a part time political activist and a full time anti-monotheist. He's also the producer and co-director of the hip-hop-cumentary Focced: US Foreign Policy in the Middle East. View his work at www.focced.com

A letter from Michael Moore: Sicko is Socko in Cannes!

Wednesday, May 23rd, 2007

Friends:

Well, as you may have read by now, our premiere of *Sicko* at the Cannes Film Festival has been an overwhelming success. The 2,000 people inside the Lumière Theater were alternately in tears and laughing during the two-hour film, and when it was over they gave it a standing ovation that seemed to go on for nearly 15 minutes! Many came up to me and said – and critics seem to agree – that this is my best film yet. I don't know about that, and it seems weird to compare any of these movies in the first place, but I do feel safe in saying that I am very, very happy with this film and I can't wait to show it to you when it opens.

Cannes is a crazy place. There are film

At my festival press conference, the only negative word came from the Canadians. Two critics didn't like all the nice things I said about their health care system. Yes, Canadian health care has its flaws, but when I asked the two critics if they would exchange their health care cards for mine, they said "No!"

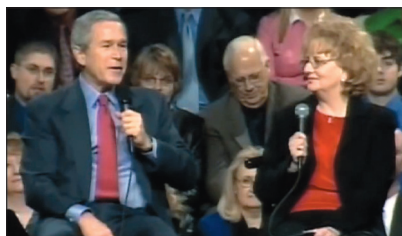
Of course they wouldn't. Canadians live longer than we do and their infant mortality is not as high as ours. Their system is underfunded because their leaders have been trying to push for more American-style health care.

The rest of the week has been good and I am now on my way back to the US. The *New York Post* reported Sunday that the Bush administration, in addition to going after me for filming scenes in or near Cuba, may now go after the 9/11 rescue workers I took with me to get the medical



lovers here from nearly every country in the world. And then there are the people in "show business." These dark forces have virtually ruined this art form (invented by the French and nurtured to brilliance by the country I call home). There are so many bad, awful films now and less and less people are going to the movies. Many who run Hollywood believe that the American people are too stupid to enjoy a film that respects their intelligence.

At the press screening for *Sicko*, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that hardened reporters and critics wept. Even those



who have been harsh to me in the past, or who have not agreed with my politics, were moved. Aside from my stated desire that *Sicko* ignite a fire for free, universal health care, and a larger wish that we, as Americans, do a better job of treating each other with a true sense of solidarity and respect, I continue to hope that I can make a contribution to the art of cinema and give people a good reason to get out of the house for a few hours.



care they were denied by our own government. I couldn't make up irony like this if I wanted to, and I will do whatever is necessary to defend the human right of these true American heroes to receive the medical attention they deserve.

We've also received word that the HMO and pharmaceutical industries are gearing up to fight *Sicko*. We received so many great whistleblower letters while we were making the movie from employees of these companies. We'd like to hear from you again! Send us the internal memos and any other plans



you run across at the company copying machine or internet server. It will help to stay ahead of whatever they are up to, and it will also give us a chance for a bit of fun at the industry's expense.

Yours, Michael Moore

Sicko opened in theatres on June 29. Visit www.michaelmoore.com for *Sicko* updates. michael@michaelmoore.com

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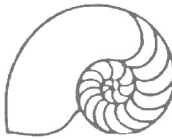
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Continuing Saga of Con Man

Personal account by Simon R.

After reading about the con man in Common Ground last month my partner, Elena, recognized Bobby. She got in touch with the magazine. Here is our encounter with "Bobby" to the best of my recollection. Any errors are mine.



Photo supplied by a victim who filed an assault charge against Bobby with the Burnaby RCMP.

Around December 15th - 20th 2006 my roommate, Sean, was waiting at Lonsdale Quay. As he was having a smoke an RCMP car pulled up, a female officer got out, opened the back door, and Bobby got out. She gave him a hug, some cash, two smokes and left. A passerby asked Sean for a smoke, but he had none. Bobby overheard this and kindly offered them each one. Sean thanked him while telling him that he was generous to a fault! He also noted the Hugo Boss suit, and Cartier watch that he was wearing. Immediately, Bobby went in to a spiel about how he was simply grateful after the harrowing ordeal he had just been through. Having been conned once before, Sean was wary, but against his better judgment asked Bobby to relate his tale. Bobby explained that while on a business trip to Seattle he had come to Vancouver for a few days and upon arriving had been mugged on Lonsdale for his laptop, wallet, money, and ID including passport. With all the evidence before him Sean decided to take a risk and invited Bobby to our apartment as he was penniless.

The story becomes very complex from that point, but the result was that Bobby managed to wring almost a week or more out on our couch, and \$300 out of Sean through various promises including a ticket for two to Australia, and a truck to start a business. He backed up all of this with fake phone calls to his 'wife' (read co-conspirator) in front of us, and various anecdotes about wealthy people including the Kennedy's daughter whom he regularly drank with, and Jim Pattison who was to provide the truck after a single phone call.

The bubble burst after Sean informed me about the truck, as Elena had just told me that Bobby had tried to sexually assault her earlier that day. Bobby had foreseen that I would want him out and was trying to give my roommate another reason to want him to stay. Sowing discord and enmity between us was just one of the methods he used to keep the focus off of him and his actions. Early that night, when Sean confronted Bobby about the money he became violent, but Sean calmed him down just before I came in, and told him to leave in the morning. It was just after Christmas, with snow on the ground when Bobby disappeared with some clothes, a ring, Sean's house keys, and some cheques, one of which he cashed a week later at Sean's bank for \$1700.

We all felt disgusted, and rather bitter, but also relieved that it was over. A couple of days later Bobby reappeared, drunk, and trying to break into our apartment while we slept. Some one called the police and he ran and hid in a neighbor's patio, tapping on the glass, and whispering to be let in. The neighbor, who is from war torn Somalia, opened the sliding door and Bobby jumped in. But my brave and cautious friend had armed himself with a machete which he used to drive Bobby back. The police then piled in, and Bobby was led away.

We didn't hear of him again until Elena saw him entering a fancy restaurant in Yaletown last month just as the story came out. Bobby was dressed well and gesticulating wildly, while spinning another tale for another victim. Looking back, I realized that Bobby was probably being released from police custody when Sean met him at the Quay. All he had was the clothes on his back, the watch, and two smokes. No money. No where to sleep. He used those few things, and his skill to con the first person he encountered. He is an expert. He is no fool. To do a good thing, to help, is honorable; to do so while putting yourself and your loved ones in danger is irresponsible.

Everything Bobby said was too good to be true. He is a dangerous person. He does not appear to be lying, and has a photographic memory. Do not let this man into your home. Do not help him in any way. Phone Vancouver Police with regards to file # 07-99338.

Editor's note: the above personal account is from one of the many people who responded to CG's small article last month titled *Warning: con man*.



Travels

TWENTY SOMETHING Ishi Dinim

CULTURE

*The last few years have taken me to some wonderful places.
These pictures are a taste of what it was like.*

Kampala, Uganda



Kampala, Uganda



Lyantonde, Uganda



Sesse Island, Uganda



The future isn't

by Geoff Olson

Measuring cultural change what it used to be

“I think everything is just going to blow up,” a friend remarked over lunch recently, as we discussed the quickening pace of cultural change. He meant ‘blow up’ as shorthand for general confusion, widespread malaise, ethnic tensions, resource wars, explosions and Murphy’s Law gone mad.

My friend isn’t optimistic about the world’s prospects. Like a lot of people, he even has doubts about his own lifestyle. During lunch, he spoke of his habit of consuming copious amounts of Hydro power with his high-end computer and home entertainment equipment. “I’m as bad as anybody else,” he said, shaking his head.

We joked about our complicity in a system we both believe to be unsustainable, and our doubts about reforming the system from within. Our token, eco-conscious efforts count for something (blue-boxing, composting, half-assed vegetarianism, etc.), but we know it’s not enough.

Obviously, I’m not the only one having this kind of discussion with friends. For those of us who think about this sort of thing, we don’t usually talk about it all that freely or with great ease. This isn’t a common topic for the family dinner or the company picnic. But once in a while, we’ll open up and express a secret conviction: The jig is up; time’s running out and we’re all heading off the cliff in a Stretch Hummer. Or more succinctly, we’re screwed.

Another friend, a retired prof, has put together a well-reasoned, trenchant pamphlet on how BC can survive the collapse of economic globalism. Others are even less optimistic; one of my wife’s relatives has expressed the belief that the human species won’t be around in a few more generations. She’s not alone; according to polls, 72 percent of British Columbians fear the world will end in two to three generations unless concerted action is taken on global warming.

Simply put, more and more people are losing faith in the system – the system being the consumer economy and the kind of foreign policy necessary to maintain our living standard. They’re convinced things have gone so far, for so long, and that the collective behaviour is so entrenched, that there is no way out other than to wait for the system to collapse and then pick up the pieces to try to build something more sane and sustainable.

A big factor in these glum tidings is the collective sense that the times are

moving faster and getting stranger as they do. Most of us have the feeling that events are speeding up out of control.

In the 1970s, the French sociologist Georges Anderla tried to measure the rate at which information changed. Using the binary notation to convert all human symbol systems into the language computers use, he calculated the rate at which the bits the units of information had doubled since the time of Christ.

The doubling, he determined, has occurred in ever-smaller time increments over the past 2,000 years. The first doubling lasted from 0 AD to 1500 AD. It then took from 1500 to 1750 for information to double once again. By the late twentieth century, it took only from 1967 to 1973 for information to double.

By the late eighties, information theorists were claiming that information was doubling every 18 months. Bear in

more information than a medieval peasant would have encountered throughout his entire life. Perhaps this is one reason why we’ve become the first people in history to know so little about so much. With all this freely available knowledge, far beyond the capacity of any individual to absorb the barest fraction of it, why try to remember any information subject to sudden, radical change? From the latest scientific theories to the borders of troubled lands, it’s all up for grabs. The average American high school student can no more place Iraq on a map than you or I could name the varieties of quarks in an atomic nucleus. (Yet most of us can name all the *Simpsons*.)

A more rigorous assessment of cultural change is seen in the recent work of Canadian sociologist Thomas Homer-Dixon. In his 2006 book *The Upside of Down*, he cites the usual suspects for

the halfway point in global oil reserves – increased scarcity will become an even greater factor in international and domestic tensions. (It’s now blindingly obvious that the war in Iraq was about securing Mideast oil and protecting the petrodollar. In fact, as noted in a March 24, 2003 White House press release, the original White House tagline for the 2003 invasion was “Operation Iraqi Liberation” (OIL). But Karl Rove’s cynical jokesters were being a little too obvious and the name was quickly changed to “Operation Iraqi Freedom.”)

According to Homer-Dixon, we First Worlders live so far out of equilibrium with the carrying capacity of the environment that the collapse of our civilization is a very real possibility. Historian Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, considers this such a probable scenario – especially given the historical record of vanished civilizations – that he titled his recent book just that: *Collapse*. Similarly, urban theorist Jane Jacob’s last book bore the uplifting title *Dark Age Ahead*.

I once overheard someone at a party offer a capsule account for our persistent historical habit of war: “The whole male gig is build and destroy, build and destroy, build and destroy. And women always get to clean up the mess.” But does this picture of historical inevitability, from Agamemnon to Halliburton, mean we’re fated to play out the same dreary scenario of little boys smashing each other’s sand castles, with the waves sweeping away their tiny flags and pennants?

Some believe our willingness to buy into dystopic projections is largely a function of modern communication systems. In this view, things are neither better nor worse than before; it’s just the widespread availability of fast-reporting media that makes it seem so. Scary stories once told around campfires have been processed and packaged into high-end, prime-time frights of future catastrophe. (Y2K, anyone?)

As they say in the news business, “If it bleeds, it leads.” Conflict sells, while the countless stories of people around the world cooperating and conspiring for a better future get short shrift and less coverage. Consider the phenomenon of microcredits, which have transformed people’s lives in the Third World by allowing them access to small loans. Or web sites like Kiva.org, which enables First World residents to send microloans directly to Third World members. These may be small as individual efforts, but,

In the leadup to 2010’s Olympic orgasm for developers, the city council has passed laws to keep street people from sitting on park benches or reclining in parks. Behind this crazy-making effort to create a “civil city” is a conception of humans as rubbish.

mind that this binary calculation doesn’t necessarily mean knowledge per se; it includes all cultural information, from academic journals to ham radio broadcasts to gross-out film comedies.

By the late nineties, the idea of cultural acceleration had moved from the obscure argot of futurologists to the millennial musings of US talk radio host Art Bell, who pegged it “The Quickening.” Bell’s notion was pretty much undefined, beyond the sense of things picking up pace. But he struck a definite chord in listeners, who called in to offer news oddities and their paranormal anecdotes as evidence that things were going at a breakneck pace to who knows where, and getting more bizarre as they went. Bell’s all-purpose catchphrase became a best-selling book and a middlebrow seine net for anything new and unusual.

The Quickening: Today’s Trends, Tomorrow’s World offers the half-enthralled, half-appalling vision of Homo sap hurling out of control toward some kind of cosmic comeuppance. According to one frequently cited claim, the Sunday *New York Times* contains

problematic change: global warming, energy scarcity, population imbalances and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. What concerns Dixon is that these trends are not unconnected, and that together they create negative feedback loops, in which each one amplifies the effects of the others. He calls this deadly phenomenon “panarchy.”

When it comes to our need for energy, Dixon writes, “Our rich western societies aren’t that different from poor developing societies, or for that matter, ancient Rome. All of our societies require enormous amounts of high-quality energy just to sustain, let alone raise, their complexity and order.”

Civilization can only maintain its current state through a cheap, abundant supply of oil. No renewable alternative sources come close in energy output (the closest is solar power). And for all the complaints about rising fuel costs in North America, gasoline is still cheaper here by volume than bottled water. Yet if the “peak oil” experts like Richard Heinberg, Matt Simmons and others are correct – that we are about to hit

in terms of global change, the collective effects of such connected, altruistic initiatives may be seismic. The open source movement – in which anonymous individuals contribute to the building of freely available software and databases – demonstrates that the impulse to contribute for a greater good, rather than compete for self-advancement, has been woefully underrated by consumer culture.

With no shortage of bad news, we all want to hear news of workable solutions, and new ways of thinking. We want to believe that if we're going to be around for a global transformation, it'll be one we can live with. This brings us to the "spiritual" take on cultural change.

Decades ago, the French Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin reworked the Christian apocalypse with his idea of an "Omega point," a time at which the planetary mind, the "Noosphere," awakens from the sum of interconnected human thought. In retrospect, the Noosphere sounds a lot like the Internet. And there does indeed seem to be a planetary awakening of sorts occurring, courtesy bloggers and webmasters. The Internet may be a mixed bag, but on the plus side there's a wider spectrum of debate in these ungoverned fairgrounds than is found under the circus big tops of the mainstream media. With the latter dominated by flacks and self-censoring careerists, the cultural conversation has largely migrated to the Internet. The blogs are leaving the newspaper editorial pages behind, and it may not be too much longer before the respectable print-based pundits find themselves at the children's table.

Hunter S. Thompson's aphorism still stands: "When things get weird, the weird go pro." One of the weirder pros on the cultural change circuit was the late Terrence McKenna, a carnival barker for a lower-case apocalypse, who riffed off the ideas of de Chardin. To this author of fringe ideas, the sense that things are going faster (and getting stranger) foreshadows a near-term transformation of the human species. McKenna believed that increasing synchronicity, among other distortions of the 9 to 5 reality, is the shadow, projected backwards across the historical landscape of what he called a "hyperdimensional object" at the end of history: the unitary end goal of human spiritual/material evolution. He believed that the human imagination will ultimately take us there – whatever "there" means in this context.

Evolution may be far stranger than we think, McKenna believed. The Internet, interfacing of humans and machines, pharmacology, nanotechnology and the merging of databases are all part of this "hyperdimensional object" pulling us forward in time. But we will get the future we deserve, depending on our intent. "All of this is coalescing toward the potential of a truly demonic or angelic kind of self-imagining of our culture... And the people

who are on the demonic side are fully aware of this and hurrying full-tilt forward with their plans to capture everyone as a 100%-believing consumer, inside some kind of a beige-furnished fascism that won't even raise a ripple."

Using the notion of the "timewave," his eccentric measure of cultural change, McKenna prophesied that information

matic finale. There is no effective way to respond to the fundamentalists' claims, except perhaps cite these words from an Iraq war protest poster: "The Rapture is Not an Acceptable Exit Strategy."

Whether it's the *Revelations* of the Old Testament or the revelations of Daniel Pinchbeck, we have every right to be suspicious of prophecy, given its



acceleration will peak in the year 2012. This apparently came independently of the work of writer Jose Arguelles, and others, who believe humanity and the world will undergo a transformation when the fifth Maya Great Age completes its cycle on December 21, 2012.

In Daniel Pinchbeck's *2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl*, the New York author has a guardedly optimistic take on 2012 and the Mayan calendar. Yet toward the end of this psychedelic memoir, Pinchbeck's shamanic journeying leads him to believe that he himself is the reincarnation of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl – or at the very least, his mouthpiece. Needless to say, skeptics weren't persuaded by this bit of plant-based knowledge.

The 2012 prophecies offer a multicultural twist on a persistent Judeo-Christian theme: the End Times. Many fundamentalist Christians are quite cheered that things are getting worse rather than better. If the situation continues to decline in the Mideast and even at home, for the true believers this is simply Biblical prophecy playing out to its cine-

track record (The Marxist withering of the state, the Nazi Thousand Year Reich, etc.). The notion of future salvation, including the magical thinking that informs *The Secret*, seems reminiscent of the post World War II "cargo cults" of New Guinea and Melanais. At the war's end, the allies' cargo stopped coming, so natives made mock airstrips, airports and offices and even constructed "radios" made of straw and coconuts, to draw "GI Joe" back. We may find these primitive ideas amusing, but how different are they from Judeo-Christian/New Age efforts to solicit supernatural forces through prayer, sacrifice and credit card orders?

I'm not saying there are no such things as "supernatural" forces; it's just that clever monkeys probably shouldn't rely on angels, extraterrestrials or the "universe as a store catalogue" to save their hides. The economy's energetic inputs flow from the finite planet and the biosphere's material abundance is not an infinitely renewable resource. We're embedded in the material world and we can't avoid the spiritual test of difficult choices, just because we find it unpleasant.

Whatever the merit of his 2012 musings, Terrence McKenna was always a tough thinker. "The apocalypse is not something which is coming," he insisted. "The apocalypse has arrived in major portions of the planet and it's only because we live within a bubble of incredible privilege and social insulation that we still have the luxury of anticipating the apocalypse. If you go to Bosnia or Somalia or Peru or much of the Third World then it appears that the apocalypse has already arrived."

We live in one of the areas of greatest privilege on the planet, and however messed up things look around us and beyond, we can't discount the collective weight of our efforts, especially when virtually every healthy First-Worlder still has more clout than a pedicab driver in Bangladesh and a greater voice than a seamstress in the Maldives.

If there's anything to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's assertion, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience," it seems to me that our temp work on Earth is likely less about us manifesting miracles than mastering mundane tasks, like remaining human in a world that seems increasing hostile to human values.

For instance, I'm watching things speed up in my own city, Vancouver, as legislators tighten the noose around society's most defenceless members. In the leadup to 2010's Olympic orgasm for developers, the city council has passed laws to keep street people from sitting on park benches or reclining in parks. Behind this crazy-making effort to create a "civil city" is a conception of humans as rubbish. It's both a metaphor and a screaming red flag for the world we are creating – or rather, destroying. In many urban centres across North America, this kind of sociopathic civic-mindedness has become the new normal.

As capitalism enters its cancer stage, we are watching the scars and sores emerge on the body politic. That these eruptions are living, breathing people is pretty much what you would expect as things speed up and resources wind down and the shadow of fascism creeps across the land.

"Business as usual is no longer an option," wrote Terrance McKenna. "There is no middle way. There is no Ozzie and Harriet third millennium scenario." He believed the choice was between an enlightened world of limited, earth-friendly consumption, with technology as ally rather than enemy, and "... a hideous, nightmarish world, a *Soylent Green* kind of world... where people of privilege defend that privilege with tremendous establishments of armament and propaganda and the rest of the world slips into poverty, starvation, desperation and death.

continued on p. 42



What to do now

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

Deadhead and prune

Remove spent blooms of repeat flowering roses to encourage a later flush of flowers. Deadheading used to involve cutting back the shoots to three to five leaves, but it has been shown that the more foliage the plant retains the better it performs. So deadhead hybrid tea and floribunda roses by snapping off spent flowers at the natural break point on the stem, usually one to two inches (2.5 - 5 cm) below the flower. This promotes earlier repeat flowering.

Keep on deadheading. Plants set seed after flowering to attract pollinating insects and then have no need to keep flowering. Deadheading encourages an ongoing show of flowers.

Tip: Picking sweet peas regularly prevents them from going to seed and encourages continued flowering. Dead-head rhododendrons and lilacs before they set seed. This improves the floral show for next year by channelling the plant's energy into growth instead of setting seed.

Shear back plants that have finished blooming, such as oriental poppies, hardy geraniums, pulmonaria, omphalodes, alchemilla, centaurea montana, euphorbias. Cut them just above ground level. They will go into a period of semi-dormancy followed by a flush of new foliage to fill in the gap.

Spring flowering shrubs, such as

deutzia, weigela, lilacs, philadelphus and forsythia, should be pruned after blooming. Cut out older stems, leaving younger more vigorous ones to grow. Other spring flowering shrubs, such as *Viburnum tinus*, berberis, chaenomeles, choisya and flowering currants, should be pruned now after flowering.

Remove one stem in three from *Kerria japonica*. Rhododendrons can be lightly pruned after flowering if necessary. If deciduous magnolias need pruning, do it now, when in full leaf, as pruning when dormant can lead to dieback problems, and pruning in late winter can result in bleeding. Prune overcrowded stems of *Clematis montana* once flowering is over.

After bearded irises have flowered, dig up any large clumps and split them. Select the most vigorous rhizomes with one or two fans attached. Replant them in full sun with the tops of the rhizomes just showing. If you replant them too deep they will not flower the following year.

Tip: Cut leaves back by half to prevent irises from being uprooted while the shallow roots are re-establishing.

In the vegetable garden

Try growing squash or pumpkins on the compost heap. They love a nutrient-rich medium and will go bananas. The compost should be well rotted before you sow the squash seeds or plant trans-



plants. To promote better fruiting, feed tomatoes, eggplants and peppers with granular seaweed, high in potash. It can be worked into the soil as a side dressing around established plants or incorporated into planting holes. Feed pots of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants weekly with liquid seaweed. As plants establish and their roots fill the pots, it is harder for them to absorb nutrients from the medium in the containers. A weekly liquid feed of manure tea, compost tea or liquid seaweed will compensate for this and more fruit will result. Provide asparagus beds with organic fertilizer when the last crop has been harvested. Allow the remaining spears to continue growing into ferny canes, to replenish strength in the roots.

Run out of space? Vertical gardening is the answer. Tie strings of garden twine up and down a horizontal support frame and attach beans, vining tomatoes, red malabar climbing spinach or cucumbers to this framework. Continue direct sowing of beans, squash, carrots, corn, sunflowers and beets.

Weed control is important as compe-

tition for moisture and nutrients increases. Hoe between rows during dry weather. Better yet, lay down a thick layer of straw or hay mulch to suppress weeds. Check hardneck (rocambole) garlic for seedheads (scapes). Cut the stalks down as far as the leaves or the seedheads will compromise the size of the garlic bulbs.

Tip: Enjoy the scapes as a mild garlic green in salads, stirfries or as a side vegetable.

Impoverished patches of garden soil can be replenished by planting green manures, crops that when dug back into the soil will replace nutrients. Quick-maturing, green manures include mustard, fenugreek and buckwheat. Or try phacelia, a pretty crop with ferny foliage and bright blue flowers, much loved by bees. Dig these crops under before they set seed.

From A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide by Carolyn Herriot. Second edition \$24.95. Available from your favourite bookstore or order online at www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath

Stand by cont. from p. 15

"The change in mental status was so small, the average caregiver of a patient would have no way of knowing there was any difference," he noted.

So is it worth paying \$30 million to improve a person's cognitive function, at best by three points out of 70, even when his caregiver can't tell the difference?

What about the fact that many of the patients taking the drugs, in addition to their continuous cognitive decline, now also feel terrible? Or may die prematurely because of the drug?

All good questions. Alzheimer's is a terrible disease that affects entire families and the desperation of family members is undeniable. We all would hope that a three point improvement might ease the pain and bring our parents back. Perhaps the saddest thing in the world is seeing someone you love lose their ability to recognize you. The slow loss of that person's independence is particularly hard. Drug treatments for Alzheimer's would really be worth the coin if they allowed

older people to be able to function longer in their own homes. Sadly, the one major, independent trial to demonstrate if the drugs delayed institutionalization, published in the British journal, the *Lancet*, showed that they failed on this measure.

By the way, the power of anecdote is astonishing. But for every anecdote where someone swears by the drugs for their mother, "They brought her back," etc, another person will say it made their father so miserable he wanted to die. That's why science, as opposed to anecdote, should gird any decision about whether this is an intervention worth public money.

What about alternatives? Some researchers have suggested that better nutrition or nutritional supplementation, along with mental and physical stimulation, access to games, music and sufficient caregiver support are all crucial to the well-being of people with Alzheimer's.

The most crucial question we need to ask then is where, among all the interventions and supports that could be

funded to maximize the well-being of people with this disease and their families, could \$30 million best be spent?

Citizens deserve to know how governments decide what to spend their money on, and if those decisions can be well supported and defended. In the case of Alzheimer's treatments, we might ask which specific criteria the Ministry of Health used to decide that sending up to \$30 million of BC taxpayer's money to New York and Basel (headquarters of Pfizer and Novartis respectively) was the wisest choice amongst other alternatives, such as funding better local caregiver support, respite care or community care for Alzheimer's sufferers?

What about public accountability? Let's face it; \$30 million is a lot of money for treatments that don't work for most patients and which generate a host of unpleasant side effects. The first and last word on this issue has to come from Henry McCandless, a retired auditor with the federal government, who lives in Victoria and literally wrote the book on the subject. His *A Citizen's Guide to Public*

Accountability: Changing the Relationship Between Citizens and Authorities (Trafford Publishing, 2001) stresses how citizens must understand how to apply the precautionary principle to civics, so that public decision-making and decision makers can be held accountable.

Citizens holding governments really and truly accountable on health care spending? Now that's a tsunami I'd like to see building. At the end of the day, we citizens need to say: "We're alive, active and involved. We're concerned about how major health care decisions are being made and it is not unreasonable for us to ask our elected leaders to answer for their decisions."

Alan Cassels is co-author of Selling Sickness: How the World's Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients and a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. His new book, The ABC's of Disease Mongering: A Guide to Drugs and Disorders (Emdash Book Publishing), will launch in October.

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decision is made. During the decision making process these principles must be fully examined to eliminate or reduce the potential for damage. How many historic tragedies could have been avoided had these simple advices have been followed? The pressing need today is for finding and initiating ways for global efforts in order

to safeguard and heal our planetary world to a different future.

THOUGHTS

It is the Users who give life to the IDEOGRAM developing the thoughts and putting them into practice.


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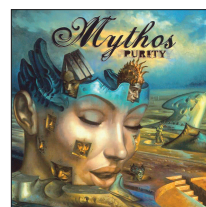
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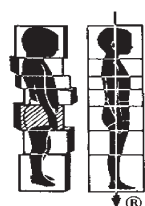


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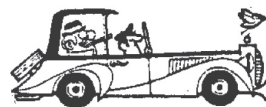
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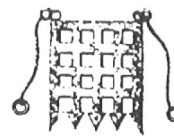


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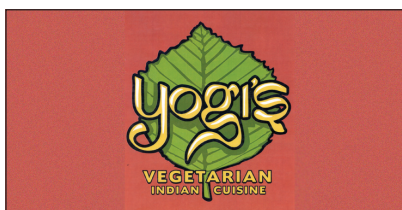
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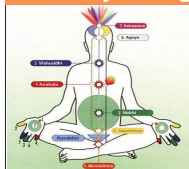
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Health food industry cont. from p.17

In the spring of 2005, the Health Committee conducted formal hearings on Bill C-420 (again supported by tens of thousands of petitions) and held witness days for stakeholders, experts and scholars. With the exception of some bureaucrats, there was near universal condemnation of Schedule A and Sections 3.1 and 3.2. The bureaucratic canard that getting rid of this clearly anti-freedom section of the act would open the door for willy nilly, US-style prescription drug advertising was demonstrated to be fraudulent.

As the fall 2005 session progressed, an historic compromise was reached at Health Committee: Senior Health Canada bureaucrats and all parties reached a compromise position on Bill C-420.

Given the complexity of the issues – international trade agreements, NAFTA, Codex, WTO, Sections 91, 92, jurisdiction issues, repeating the whole process in the Senate, etc – it was decided that

administratively depopulating Schedule A and leaving Sections 3.1 and 3.2 as "orphans," which referenced nothing, was a practical solution. This compromise was published in the *Gazette* in November 2005 as Project 1474.

Behind the policy is the bureaucratic zeal to bind Canada to international standards.

With the change in government in January 2006 and the oversight of the three previous parliaments that were shuffled to new positions, defeated or overwhelmed by new priorities, Project 1474 languished in limbo. This occurred even though "Canada's New Government" committed itself to a more commonsense approach and greater access to health food in their election platform.

Health Canada's bureaucrats, who have always hated "disinfecting sunlight and parliamentary oversight" killed 1474 with foot dragging and replaced it with their own version of reality in March of 2007. Project 1539, which spits in the face of parliament, the Canadian people and the concept of personal freedom, proposes to embark on yet more endless discussion about the already resolved reality that any restriction of the rights of Canadian's freedom of expression can only be done by including the "notwithstanding" language as referenced in both the Bill of Rights and the Charter.

Schedule A is not an *à la carte* menu. Its existence is a clear violation of our collective rights as defined by the courts, a position expressed in writing in October of 2002 by then Deputy Minister of Justice (now Deputy Minister of Health) Morris Rosenberg to then Minister of Health Anne McLellan.

While not perfect, Project 1474 was the culmination of 10 years of careful,

comprehensive work and most everyone affected (with the exception of the bureaucrats) fully endorsed the amendments to the regulations as a positive step that would make Canada a healthier and freer society.

As a relatively frequent traveller to Ottawa, I get to speak with many parliamentarians. I think the confusion about the situation we find ourselves in today is summed up very well by an off-the-cuff comment by a former cabinet minister I spoke to in late May, "What is the problem with this health food stuff anyway? We, the parliamentarians, all use it, half the Senate lives on it. If there was a problem we'd be seeing it here."

I think it's safe to assume the problems aren't health related.

Peter Helgason is president of Friends of Freedom International, VP Regulatory Affairs of the Alliance of Natural Suppliers, and works for Strauss Herb Company in Kamloops, BC.

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JUL 13-15

30th Annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival Jericho Beach Park. Info & tickets at www.thefestival.bc.ca or call 604-602-9798 / 800-883-3655.

JUL 13-15

Foot Reflexology Introduction commences certificate weekend course. Intro: \$10, Course \$295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com.

JUL 18

There is a way we can have true peace & harmony on Earth: Introducing The Master Teaching Foundation, The Brotherhood of Humanity, 7:30pm, Burnaby Metrotown Bob Prittie Library, 6100 Willingdon Ave. 604-430-1882.

JUL 21

Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle: 7pm. Insight/healing from your Nature Spirit guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre, 1254, W. 7th. By donation. Vancouver Shamanic Healing Circles. 604-418-9636, www.shamanichealing.info.

JUL 26-29

Gangaji in Vancouver: First time in Vancouver. Public meeting: Jul 26, 7pm, Masonic Hall, 1495 W. 8th Ave. Vancouver Weekend: Jul 28-29, Masonic Hall. Register online at www.gangaji.org or call 541-482-3100.

AUG 2-6

Salt Spring Centre of Yoga Family Yoga Retreat: With guest Baba Hari Dass. Classical teachings of hatha and ashtanga yoga. Weekend Yoga getaways in July, Sept, & Oct. Info & registration, www.saltspring-centre.com or 250-537-2326.

AUG 3-12

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AUG 10-13

Australian Bush Flower Essences Workshops - Astrology and Bush Essences 10th ~ Level 1: 11 & 12th ~ Women's Wellbeing and Bush Essences 13th. Facilitator - Linn Wiggins Vancouver. Contact Lori - www.ausangels.com or 1-866-477-6779.

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AUG 12

Alan Cohen, author of Relaxing into Wealth and Handle With Prayer at the Centre for Spiritual Living, 11am service and 1:15pm - 4:15pm workshop. www.cslvancouver.com

AUG 16-OCT 4

Writing & Ritual with Michelle Benjamin - Sing Sound Pray Write - To register contact Stillpoint Gallery & Healing Centre, 604-224-6857, 4419 W. 10th Ave.

SEP 29-30

Taste of Health 2007 Vancouver's vegetarian food & lifestyle festival: Sat/Sun Exhibits, workshops, speakers, bookfair, veggie court. Commercial Drive. Croatian Cultural Centre, www.earthsave.ca

OCT 24-28

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International Spiritualist Alliance: #201-317 Columbia Street, New West, 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11am. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663, www.isacanada.ca. See Resource Directory ad.

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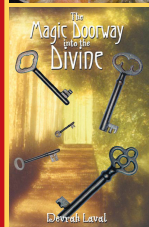
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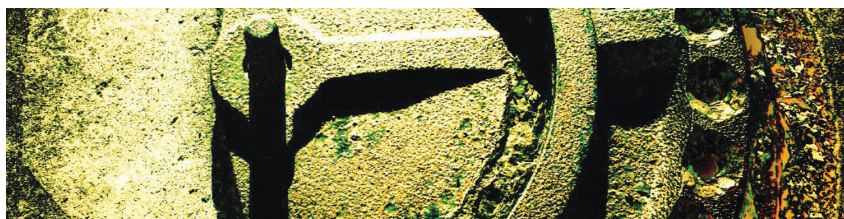
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The future cont. from p. 31

"This is the kind of world that rationalists fear, and it's also the only kind of world they can imagine because they are bankrupt of inspiration and ideas."

The response of the "rationalists," wrote McKenna, are media which are "narcoleptic and deadening," and doctor-prescribed psychotropic drugs which are "not transcendental and inspiring." The rationalists' largely unconscious game, he believed, is to keep the population anaesthetized as the collapse proceeds around us. But the author didn't believe a dystopia was set in stone. He believed our species is approaching a fork in the road, where we will choose either the angelic or demonic path. We may quibble on the date – 2012 or whenever – but McKenna's brand of apocalypse more believable by the day.

Perhaps with our limited capacity to see the big picture, we only pick up on the signs of cross-cultural sickness, without recognizing them as part of a healing process. But recognizing there is a sickness to begin with is the first step. Denial and repression aren't healthy options. This is where the artists, musicians and creators come in, to do their age-old, canary in the coal mine shtick.

I've heard from so many people who are disgusted by the ascendancy of bullshit and hypocrisy over decency and truth. And even those who avoid the newspaper and evening news are feeling a free-floating anxiety about the world's state. They may disguise it with cynical humour or ironic distance, but at its source, it's about grief. I feel it myself. But there's an odd thing about grief as an emotional state. It's only a degree of separation, a hair-breadth away, from joy.

Knowledge, in some esoteric traditions, is considered a false crown. I suspect that it's not cleverness, but compassion, that will test our fitness as a species. I have no academic citations handy for this, no journalistic references. The closest I can come is an anecdote from Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield, about one of the twentieth century's great minds, Aldous Huxley.

As the author of *Brave New World* lay dying, someone asked what he had learned from a lifetime of studying spiritual practices and traditions, as well as his own experiences. His response: "It's embarrassing to tell you this, but it seems to come down mostly to just learning to be kinder."

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On Track Zodiac

JULY 2007 Adrien Dillon



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Jupiter lends a guiding hand by emitting a complementary, fiery energy necessary for you to fulfill your dreams. You can get out of your own way and make some decisions to follow your heart. Great times ahead as you hit the open road and travel, if you so desire.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

You wrestled with your mental constraints for some time. No longer strong and silent, you put your mind and tongue in motion to create a stirring of the *status quo*. Once reserved, you now make bold and big moves in communicating your ideas. Your divine voice can be heard for miles.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

You may be experimenting with various things as you discover a new path that coincides with your ethics. Career and your motives will be foremost on your mind. Prior to this awakening, you couldn't have known what you would be doing now. What was just an idea has become a reality, beyond your wildest imagination.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Your self-expression hits a high note. Communications are as open and free-flowing as the ocean itself. Events have an unusual, synchronistic tone as you discover that those you meet have some sort of message for you that helps in your healing journey. Don't step on the toes of the messenger.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You go from passionate play to passionate chastity. Venus is flowing through you bringing different influences; you have an opportunity to feel your "oats" and then to bring it all close to home again and reserve your sentiments. From devotion to temperance, your indulgences will shift gears as the breeze blows.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

You will begin to see how all the limitations and seemingly difficult times have been perfect fodder for immense growth. As we sometimes can't see the forest for the trees, you may, nevertheless, get a glimpse that reveals your unfolding maturity. You become the butterfly with colourful wings.



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You may find it a real effort to stay fit and focused on health matters. Indulgences tempt you like the proverbial snake. Perhaps try to pare down your choices so that you don't actually end up having a pear-like shape. If not, enjoy some humour and let it free you from an overly-serious attitude about yourself.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

While one could say that your defences are down, a self-esteem issue could also be wreaking havoc with your emotions. It's all preparatory work now that finds you unable to betray your spirit. If you ask for answers and nothing comes, it is still abundantly clear that you need to be patient. Great masterpieces take time and vision.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Some may go through mistrust of a partner and others may discover that they have never felt so nurtured and loved. Each of life's cycles contains a bit of a paradox. Your job is to have regard for yourself and watch what the universe brings to you. Remember to see the full circle and not just one slice of the big picture.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You may find that you have a more impersonal approach and detached outlook than usual. Still, you seek more balance and want to strike out on your own. To find a path that truly speaks more clearly to your needs, you might seek solace. Such is the power of self-realization.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

You may be prone to thinking outside the box and exercise unorthodox behaviour. As a true lover of science, you discover new modes of thinking and have the ability to focus your mind with precision. Use this time to both fascinate and be fascinated.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

You get a reprieve, a respite, from concern over personal matters. Take this month to completely let go of mental burdens and stress. You will find your ability to relax becomes second nature. Now is your chance to really feel what you "want" and go after it. Seize every opportunity laid at your feet.

Adrien Dillon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 32 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing. adrien.dillon@gmail.com, www.HeartLightCentre.com

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